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# OINES OF FICTIO

By W. D. HOWELLS
AUTHOR OF
"[illegible]EARY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCE" ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. C. CHRISTY
A. I. KELLER, AND OTHERS

VOLUME II.

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# HEROINES OF FICTION

# HEROINES OF FICTION

## CHARLES KINGSLEY'S HYPATIA

THE interest felt in the novels of the Brontë sisters was from the first intensely personal, and it grew more and more personal, as the veil was lifted from their pathetic lives, and the close relation between what they had written and what they had been was seen. In the average unliterary mind the relation between the author and his work is always a thing to be taken for granted. He is identified with this or that person in the fiction, and if the reader of average unliterary mind has the chance of speaking to him about his story, he will say, "There, where the girl comes to you, and you tell her," or the like. Sometimes this is amusing, and sometimes it is dismaying; in any case it is useless for the author to protest; and it is not very good business for him to do so. The average unliterary reader loves him and his work, according as he finds him personally in it, or believes he finds him.

This passion was fed full in the case of the Brontës, and they were taken to the hearts of their readers as few authors have been. Their books were in fact very personal to themselves. Charlotte may be easily and probably associated with the nature if not the character and experience of Jane Eyre; she can hardly be dissociated from it; and if in the more detached and dra-

matic story of "Wuthering Heights," Emily cannot be so unfailingly identified with this or that person, yet there is an identity in the animate and inanimate environment of her life and that of the people in "Wuthering Heights" which is quite as satisfying to the average unliterary mind. She had not and could not have the world-wide worship of her sister; but her cult was of a more fervent devotion, with the zeal and th spiritual pride of a small sect in it; and doubtless ma a bruised and prisoned spirit wreaked its bitterness the wild turbulence, the lawless violence, of "Wuthe Heights" which could not find outlet even in the of "Jane Eyre" against the social and religious fo ism of the time. But perhaps because personal triumphs in that book over all adverse circums it was dearer to more hearts, and the author was for people like to see virtue rewarded. It is at l tain that it was personal to more hearts, and i better than "Wuthering Heights," which is a with fate, for the personal insurrection again tion, which in some sort or other is always ac

The insurrection against society in the la is less pervasive because it is of more alarmi tion, but this too is perpetual; and at the that "Jane Eyre" was stirring the world for a young girl striving single-handed wit and temptation, there was another boo powerful appeal for justice in behalf of have not against those who have, for th the idlers, for famine against surfeit, f class, for manhood against moneyhood

## I

One of the most striking things ley's "Alton Locke: Tailor and Poe

of the problems involved, the conditions combated, the terms of the contest, and the very language in which they are stated. The book is on this side palpitantly actual, though the literary attitude is so old-fashioned and outdated. The Chartist agitation of fifty years ago is mirrored in the Socialist aspiration of the present day; its aims are effectively the same, its means the same, its vocabulary the same, and neither the reasons nor the unreasons with which it was then met have since changed. Its quarrel is now less with aristocracy and more with plutocracy; but these were always really convertible if not identical, and now the quarrel is more directly with capital because class without capital is no longer to be feared. The one great matter in which the new industrial rebellion differs from the old is in its attitude towards religion; but this change has taken place less through the hearts of the toilers than through the hearts of the teachers. The church has risen to an ideal of Christianity which was intuitive with the world of work and need; and it was already beginning to imagine its duty in the modern industrial conditions when "Alton Locke" was written. How much that book had to do with clarifying its conception of this duty it would not be easy to say; but we can make sure of the fact that "Alton Locke" has been potent as a twofold protest: first against the cruel exploitation of labor, and second against the misdirected resentment of the sufferers. Its insurrection is on a far broader ground, and with a much wider intention than that of "Jane Eyre." It is human and that is personal; but because humanity is still so much weaker than personality, it has probably influenced vastly fewer readers. Then, it has failed of equal influence, undoubtedly, because it is not of equal art. It is a polemic, in which all the characters, of whatever party they apparently are, are always arguing for the author. They stand

for this thing or that, but they have not risen of themselves; they are where they are because he put them there. English fiction is for the most part still in the stage of allegory, though there were always masters who could teach it the higher function of drama. Charles Kingsley was not of these masters, at least in "Alton Locke," and he was too didactic by nature and by culture ever to be simply representative. He is trying to carry a point, to enforce a truth, rather than to show it and let it enforce itself. In "Alton Locke," the hero, who speaks for himself in the autobiographical form, is really a character, a person; Kingsley always dealt well with the literary type, its consciousness, its conceit, its self-distrust, its timid selfishness, and its bursts of enthusiasm; but the others are merely frameworks actuated directly from the author, doing the things they are expected to do. This is especially true of the two women who must stand for the heroines. Neither Lillian Winnstay, the shallow-hearted, romantic beauty, who flatters the poor poet by her pleasure in his verse and his picturesque personality, nor Eleanor Staunton, who snubs him for his good, but is really his friend, and the faithful friend of all the poor, is more than an illustration. They have their being, not in a world of law, but a world of special providences (the world of nearly all English fiction), and they do what it happens to them to do, and for the effect upon Alton Locke, whom they are to teach that if the upper classes are sometimes self-absorbed they are also sometimes self-devoted. This was a useful thing enough, and something that not only a burning-hearted orator and agitator like Alton Locke could profitably realize, but that all the struggling and suffering lower classes would do well to understand; yet it was not a thing that could give them dramatic projection, apparently, beyond the will of their creator. Lillian Winnstay was of rather more palpable sub-

stance than Eleanor Staunton, and in her more complex behavior she achieves something like the complexity of a real character. She is at least not exemplary, and so far she is saved from the worst that can befall a type in fiction, or perhaps in life. In a book so largely devoted to making it clear that the church is not the enemy but the true friend if not sole hope of the poor, it is much to have her the daughter of a dean; and it is in the interest of her reality that she is kept from anything worse than an intellectual flirtation with the sweat-shop poet, or from anything but an æsthetical appreciation of his picturesqueness.

## II

It is a curious fact that a sort of imagination, like that of a poet, and especially such a poet as Kingsley was, can somehow give its creations greater verisimilitude by putting them back in time, where they may be posed in an arbitrary light, with a setting unquestioned by the familiar experiences and associations of the reader. For this reason Hypatia in the novel of her name is more lifelike than Eleanor Staunton, and her foil Pelagia is more lifelike than Eleanor Staunton's foil, Lillian Winnstay. Hypatia is really a young lady of the early eighteen-fifties, of the time when young ladies of her type were crudely called strong-minded. She was a sort of Alexandrian Margaret Fuller, with more good looks than our transcendental muse could pretend to; but not of a loftier ideal, a purer soul, a more "orphic utterance." She was a woman-version of Julian the Apostate, and she was born in Athens and lived and lectured at Alexandria not long after that paganizing

reactionary failed to persuade the world that there was something in the old mythology or philosophy. She had a large following of cultured and gilded youth, but the mob, led on by the turbulent monks of the city, under the countenance of the patriarch Cyril, rose in tumult against her, and she was torn to pieces by the Christian zealots. So far history, with whose elements our poet (and Kingsley was a very true if not a very great poet) deals as he may and will, and reconstructs in a figure of at least as much recognizable reality as the heroines of his novels of modern life.

It cannot be said by the unprejudiced reader that his Hypatia is an attractive personality. He has somehow failed to give her charm, though he has given her a beautiful body, perfectly moulded features, with blue eyes and yellow hair, and a glorious intellect. But the truth is his Hypatia remains as cold as the baths of Apollo, and it is not going too far to say that she is rather repellent. Of course she might answer that she did not mean to be otherwise, in her poet's hands, as that what he had shown her, that she was: rather arrogant in mind, holding matrimony in high scorn, and thinking but little better, if any, of maternity. The passion of the ardent young monk Philammon for snow-cold divinity is not made altogether credible. His sister, poor, pretty Pelagia, who has lived a life of a wanton and is presently the paramour of the chief Amal, is more winning in some things to the heart. She is passionately faithful to her stupid, honest Goth, and she is kind to everyone with a willingness to see people happy even if not virtuous. She is spiritually modest, and unconscious in her other immodesty. When awakened through the dim memories of childhood the fact that she and Philammon are sister

long ago carried captive from Athens and sold into slavery, she tries hard to let the monk bring her to a conviction of sin. But though she is good Christian enough to believe in hell, she also believes in God, and thinks He will take into consideration the peculiar circumstances under which she remains constant to Amal, whom the customs of the Goth's tribe will not suffer to marry her.

In all this Pelagia is certainly not a better woman than Hypatia; but she is a more lovable nature, and she does not make Hypatia's fatal mistake of trying to transcend her own nature. Hypatia would have married the faithless prefect Orestes in the hope of restoring the old Greek faith, though in her neoplatonism she is as passionless as he is faithless. Her author deals intelligently with her, but somehow he fails to deal impressively, and, as regards the reader's sympathy or even interest, he fails to deal successfully. It may be that he suffers himself to be too strictly trammelled by history—the historical romance must not, of all things, be historical—and does not give his imagination free play in her character. In any case she remains a woman without warmth of heart, that supreme mode of motion, without heat even of intellect. She cannot, therefore, impart movement to the figures of the drama around her and centring in her. The Alexandria of the fifth century is a great scene, with its wild monks doing the will of the bigoted Cyril, and wreaking their fanaticism now upon the Jews and now upon the pagans; with its Roman prefect seeking to hold the turbulent population in check alternately by tyranny and flattery; with its belated schools of Greek philosophy; with its church already sunk into superstition and corruption; with its swarming masses of every race and color, the prey of every lawless impulse from within and without, effete and hysterical, violent and cruel, kept from famine

by public doles of food, and amused by bloody public shows at once pitiless and shameless; and "Hypatia" is Kingsley's endeavor and his failure to fuse all these warring elements into a dramatic whole. In spite of his admirable conception of the situation, his learning, his poetic insight, they will not respond to his intention. They remain dispersed, as they might not if they had been grouped about a central figure of more cohesive power. But all the different particles seem to crumble away from the repellent nature of the heroine, whose fate the spectator beholds with compassion certainly, but with more horror than compassion. On a far higher plane than Bulwer's work in "The Last Days of Pompeii," Kingsley's work in "Hypatia" falls below it in artistic effect; for Bulwer, cheap as he was, was at least a melodramatist, while Kingsley was no dramatist at all, but an exalted moralist willing to borrow the theatre for the ends of the church. If we realize this we shall understand why his figures seem to have come out of the property-room by way of the vestry. Orestes, the debauched Roman prefect, believing neither in the god nor the saints, but willing to propitiate the friends either as they shall serve the turn of his ambition; M am, the haggish slave-dealer, who knows the com paternity of Pelagia and Philammon, and is the m of Orestes's boon companion, the brilliant Jewish tic and cynic Raphael Aben-Ezra, partner of Ore passion for the snow-cold Hypatia, and destined true Christian conversion; Theon, the Heavy J of Hypatia, who consents for his sake as well as h ambition to listen to the suit of Orestes; the wh of monkish and prelatic fanatics; the forty barbarians stalking large and blond through and casually hewing down enough miscreant tradition and persuasion to satisfy the blo reader; the hermits and fathers of the des

HYPATIA

various soldiers, students, porters, slaves, and singing and dancing women who thickly people the scene, all affect us like old friends from beyond the foot-lights. The conception is not wanting in originality; it is the performance which seems somehow second-hand in most cases. The affair has many dramatic moments; it often promises to be a drama, but it never quite is so. As a representation of antique life closer to our own than either that of "Quo Vadis" or "The Last Days of Pompeii," it lacks as much the brute plethora and intensity of the one as the histrionic knack of the other; and yet the message it conveys is more vital than that of either. It realizes to us that human motives and passions are immutably the same in all times and places; that philosophy perishes in spite of its beauty and truth, and that religion survives in spite of its ugliness and falsehood, because it takes account of the things of the soul and philosophy cares only for the things of the mind. It teaches that the Christianity of the nineteenth century as well as the fifth needs to be saved from itself before it can save the world, but that it alone can save the world.

Kingsley was a poet—I am always saying that—and he passionately loved the artistic presence of the antique world. He was one of those Hellenizing English minds of whom Keats was the first and finest, and he stood in some such relation to the pagan past as one of the earliest Greek Christians might, feeling the beauty of its ideality while abhorring its sensuality. He was very fit indeed to write a much better story of the zealots and sophists of Alexandria than he actually wrote in "Hypatia," and I still think it was through his heroine that he failed. If I fail to prove this, and any reader recurring to the book after many years, or coming newly to it, shall find it greater than I have found it in my second reading, I shall rejoice, and save myself by

making my critic observe that I always said the author was a poet.

## III

Kingsley himself recognizes a difficulty in rehabilitating to the fancy the period he has chosen, and this difficulty lies in the impossibility of telling all about paganism. He could tell the worst about Christianity, but without a statement of the unnamable iniquities which the old faith suffered if it did not foster there could be no sufficient contrast of the two. In paganism there could be no conviction of sin; there could be offences against the will or the dignity of the gods, but none against the spirit of righteousness, such as quicken the soul of the offender to repentance; and in like manner there could be no such meekness of heart as attributes its virtue to some source of goodness outside itself. Hypatia's enthusiasm for the pagan philosophy must ignore the foulness of the pagan life; and her stainless personal purity must rejoice in itself as the effect of he own will. She has but two passions, or rather one for ambition includes jealousy, and she is envious the witchery which Pelagia has for the hearts of m and cannot bear that the dancing-woman should er the triumph which she herself disdains. She has following of those who can adore beauty that le and illumines, but she must have all, or at lea cannot suffer that her rival should have any.

It will have been seen that Hypatia, after al not escape being a woman; she is, indeed, the woman in failing, and it is in the throes of recognized limitations that the heart warms little. Hypatia angered that Pelagia shou supreme attraction of the spectacle that the planning, is at least more tolerable than I

fusing to let Pelagia profit by her teaching, even at the prayer of her beloved pupil Philammon, because she will not have her own purity contaminated by Pelagia's presence. In her former mood she is at the worst sincere, but in the latter mood she is at the best not credible even if she is sincere. It is hard to see what side of Hypatia is accessible to sympathy, but the terrible spectacle of her death must inspire compassion. This acquires reality rather from the passions of her murderers than from any quality of her own; and it is difficult to conceive of her even as a living impersonation of intellectual pride suffering martyrdom. Is not she rather a statue to a belated ideal, thrown down and broken to pieces by the sanguinary zealots of another faith? It is hard even to believe in Philammon, her pupil and lover, who has turned monk again, but who deserts his brethren to warn her of their hate, and to save her from their fury, as she appears after her lecture, in the street where they are lurking.

"At last a curricle, glittering with silver, rattled round the corner and stopped opposite him. . . . A slave brought forth an embroidered cushion, and then Hypatia herself came forth, looking more glorious than ever; her lips set in a sad, firm smile; her eyes uplifted, inquiring, eager, and yet gentle, dimmed by some great inward awe, as if her soul were far away aloft, and face to face with God. In a moment he sprang to her, caught her robe convulsively, threw himself on his knees before her. 'Stop! Stay! You are going to destruction!' Calmly she looked down upon him. 'Accomplice of witches! Would you make of Theon's daughter a traitor like yourself?' She believed him guilty, then! It was the will of God! The plumes of the horses were waving far down the street before he recovered himself and rushed after her, shouting he knew not what. It was too late. A dark wave of men

rushed from the ambuscade, surged round the car—swept forward—she had disappeared; and, as Philammon followed breathless, the horses galloped past him madly homeward with the empty carriage. Whither were they dragging her? To the Cæsareum, to the Church of God himself? Impossible! Why thither, of all places on the earth? Why did the mob, increasing momentarily by hundreds, pour down upon the beach, and return brandishing flints, shells, fragments of pottery? She was upon the church steps before he caught them up, invisible among the crowd, but he could track her by the fragments of her dress. . . . He would save her! And he struggled in vain to pierce the dense mass of parobolani and monks, who, mingled with fishwives and dock-workers, leaped and yelled around their victim. . . . Yes! On into the church itself! Into the cool, dim shadow, with its fretted pillars and lowering domes, and candles and incense, and blazing altar, and great pictures looking from the walls across the gorgeous gloom. And right in front, above the altar, the colossal Christ watching unmoved fro off the wall, his right hand raised, to give a bless or a curse? On, up the nave, fresh shreds of her d strewing the holy pavement, up the chancel steps th selves, up to the altar, right underneath the great Christ, and there even these hell-hounds paused. shook herself free from her tormentors, and, spri back, rose for a moment to her full height, naked white against the dusky mass around, shame dignation in those wide, clear eyes, but not a fear. With one hand she clasped her gold around her; the other long, white arm was upward toward the great still Christ, appea who dare say in vain?—from man to God. were open to speak, but the words that come from them reached God's ear alone; [illegible]

stant Peter struck her down, the dark mass closed over her again, and then, wail on wail, long, wild, ear-piercing, rung along the vaulted roof."

But enough of this, as the novelist himself would say. Poor Hypatia, framed of such great elements by the hand of a true poet, how is it she fails of the due effect? Perhaps it is because of the double charge which the poet felt laid upon him as also a priest. He must make her at once the beautiful apostle of a creed outworn, and an example of its insufficiency to the needs at least of woman nature, if not of human nature. Hawthorne could have dealt triumphantly with such a figure, and rapt us with the mystical and thrilling charm of its contrasts; but not Kingsley, too earnest as he always was for the long patience of art, and too perfervid in that zeal for his reader's soul first of all things. The dramatist can preach and he does preach by Hamlet, by Macbeth, by Othello, who are never freed, either of them, to an absolute and single significance, but if the preacher attempts to dramatize, we forget his lesson in our sense of his failure. The moral of "Hypatia" is, Beware of spiritual pride, and do not evil that good may come; but what is the meaning of Hypatia herself?

## THE NATURE OF CHARLES READE'S HEROINES

EACH great novelist invents or discovers a certain type of feminine nature which is his predominant if not his favorite type, although it is by no means his only type. He may wholly depart from it, and easily paint its opposite, or he may vary it, and disguise it, without really departing from it; but this type in its most distinctive form will characterize him in the reader's general impression. We have only to think of the dominant types of Thackeray, Dickens, Hawthorne, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, and the rest, in order to realize the fact; and they need not be alleged in proof, either themselves or their analogues or their opposites. We know what they are, and still better we know what the predominant type of such a minor novelist—[illegible] was very nearly a major novelist—as Charles Re[illegible] is: it is with an effort that I refrain from writing [illegible] he and his works seem so quite of the past. I [illegible] lately been rereading them nearly all, with a [illegible] sense of his extraordinary knowledge, and a [illegible] for his knowingness in the region of woman's [illegible] which I could not so readily qualify. It wa[illegible] fatal defect of his faculty that he valued [illegible] most upon his knowingness, and that he flo[illegible] it in the face of his readers instead of u[illegible] knowledge to instruct and delight them. [illegible] better to release a spring, and let his her[illegible] at you out of a box than to have her gr[illegible]

upon you through the mystery of womanhood, a tangible and adorable personality.

## I

Charles Reade's peculiar invention is a species of *coquette manquée*. All coquettes are *coquettes manquées* in so far as the flirt is always self-defeated in her triumph, and loses more than she gains by any conquest. But the sort of *coquette manquée* that Reade invented is the flirt in whom the impulse of mere flirtation is arrested or interrupted by a throe of conscience, or a thrill of passion, and who for peace' sake or love's sake is willing to forego the pleasure of winning a heart to no other end than feeling it hers. She has the nature of a coquette, but the heart of a woman, and is capable of sudden and supreme self-sacrifice. She is as sinuous as a serpent in arriving finally at the effects of the dove. Reade perceived that there is something feline in every woman, but he also divined that in many and perhaps in most cases she wishes to use the arts of the cat for no worse purpose than getting a soft place in a man's soul and sweetly purring there. This discovery appeared to him so extraordinary that he not only embodied its results in nearly all his heroines, but continually shouted over it, and flaunted it as the great discovery of the age, or of every age. It was indeed a very pretty find, and was not spoiled by the temperamental excesses of the discoverer, who was not without the qualities of his defects, and amidst his violences to art and taste, his ground and lofty tumbling, and his antics of all sorts, had the gift of denoting the traits of his peculiar heroines with unerring skill. He fired from the hip as well as the shoulder; he fired lying down and standing on his head; he fired with his back

to the target, looking into a mirror; he fired on the quick run; but he rarely failed to strike the centre of the mark, and when he rang the bell one could (at least in one's youth) forgive him if he leaped into the air and clicked his heels together with a whoop of triumph.

## II

He was as apt to give a whoop of triumph upon a small occasion as a great; and he made no unusual noise over so admirable a creature as Lucy Fountain in "Love Me Little, Love Me Long." He was perhaps rather more boisterous about Mrs. Bazalgette, who is the ultimation of all Lucy's worst feminine tendencies. We see in this full-blown flirt what Lucy might have been if she had not resolutely remained a bud, and kept her wiles and lures firmly folded within the green leaves of the calyx out of which they were suffered merely to peep. But this delightful girl is shown us with reticence almost as discreet as her own; and an artist who had a 'prentice boyishness to the last—his boyishness grew upon him, in fact—shows in her likeness more of the quiet of a master than in any other portraiture. She is most charmingly and originally imagined throughout. Many ladies have loved below them in fiction as well as out, but Lucy is the first girl of her kind to do so; for she is not romantic or passionate, and is of a fancy well guarded by the knowledge and the wisdom of the world. She cannot help seeing that David Dodd is a hero in his unconscious way, but she is perfectly aware that the mate of a merchantman is no mate for a young lady of her wealth and station, to say nothing of her birth and breeding. She is captivated by his career and character, but almost in an æsthetic way at first, and not in any fond fashion of

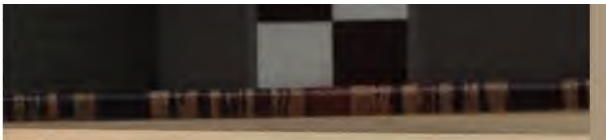
loving him for the dangers he has passed. He surprises her, and then he interests her, and, as it were, convinces her. Her heart slips away from her, while she is in full possession of her reason, and while she can still be shocked at his awkwardness and ashamed of him, even, at times. All the successive and synchronous facts of her consciousness are clearly and subtly, if not delicately, studied; her beauty is vividly painted, and her little tricks and traits—the things in which personality most shows itself, if not resides—are bewitchingly caught. Her serviceable subservience to her Aunt Bazalgette, which always ends at some point where Lucy has made up her mind to have her own way, is of the same texture as her complaisance with her Uncle Fountain, who believes that she is going to marry the man of his choice while she is sweetly meaning to marry the man of her own, or rather to let him marry the woman of his, for that is more exactly the relation of the strenuous David Dodd to the event. Her good sense and sagacity are equal to the demands upon them, even after marriage, when they so often fail with ladies who marry for love; and having let the mate of a merchantman choose her, she chooses his lot in life and forsakes her own. She abdicates her place in society, and accepts her new condition with the grace that distinguishes her in all things, great and small.

In recently reading her history through again, I have found it, because of her, as delightful as it was at the first or the second reading. I have felt the author's foibles more, but I think I have been also more sensible of his very uncommon cleverness, and I am more than ever grateful to him for such a girl as Lucy Fountain. He does not overdo her; in his most successful moments he does not make such a clamor as usual; she has the ladylike power to put even her creator on his best be-

havior, and to make almost a master of him; just a she knows how to get the better of her Aunt Bazalgett and her Uncle Fountain, in their respective forms o selfishness, to keep Mr. Talboys from being offensive and to prevent David Dodd from kicking him when she fails. She is the universal solvent of the story reconciling and adapting its warring elements, and when she has done her office, resuming her individuality at the final precipitation of events to lose it then in the absolute self-devotion of love.

## III

I do not know in fiction a more pleasing story on the lines along which her story capers so nimbly. The situation is one which has always tempted the novelist and always will till novelists shall be no more. There is a perennial fascination in the notion of love between higher station and lower, but commonly the fascination is too great for the novelist's sense of proportion, his respect for probability, and his reverence for truth. He is very, very rarely so candid as Reade, who has dealt with it more than once, and always pretty faithfully, resisting fairly well the temptation to blink its implications. Difference of social tradition is effaced in the glow of passion, as we see in the case of young ladies who now and then run away with their fathers' coachmen; but their experience seems to be that it reasserts itself as passion fades. This is the experience of Lucy Fountain after she becomes Mrs. David Dodd; but that adorable creature philosophically ignores what she practically knows: that is, she makes the best of the inevitable, and as we see in "Very Hard Cash," where the tale of her life after marriage is continued from "Love Me Little, Love Me Long," she is not





less fond of Dodd because he proves inalienably the simple heroic sailor that she fell in love with him for being. Few heroines are equal to so much, and it is for this reason chiefly that we must respect her.

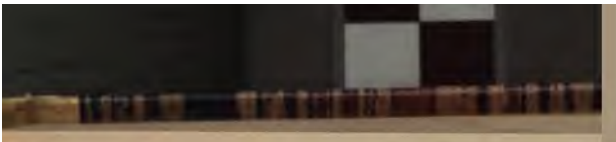
The author far more easily makes us like her; for it is easier to impart the sense of charm than the sense of character; and we begin to feel her charm from the moment when bored to death helping her Uncle Fountain find himself at the top of his family tree, "by a gymnastic of courtesy she first crushed, and then so moulded a yawn that it glided into a society smile." You begin to feel her character still earlier, in that wonderful first chapter where she is shown the triumphant victim of her Aunt Bazalgette's selfishness, a wily martyr who plans to have her own amidst the flames of sacrifice, and a moralist who keeps her conscience clean from the environing pitch of Mrs. Bazalgette's lies. This lady once takes possession of the drawing-room to try on a dress she means to make Lucy make over for her:

"Mrs. Bazalgette then rang the bell, and told the servant to say she was out if any one called, no matter who. Meantime Lucy, impressed with the gravity of her office, took the dress carefully down from the pegs; and as it would have been death to crease it, and destruction to let its hem sweep against any of the inferior forms of matter, she came down the stairs holding this female weapon of destruction as high above her head as Judith waves the sword of Holofernes in Etty's immortal picture. The other had just found time to loosen her dress and lock one of the doors; she now locked the other, and the rites began. Well ! ! ? ? 'It fits you like a glove.' 'Really? tell the truth now; it is a sin to tell a story—about a new gown. What a nuisance one can't see behind one!' 'I could fetch another glass, but you may trust my word, aunt. This point behind is very becoming; it gives distinction to

the waist.' 'Yes, Baldwin cuts these bodies better than Olivier; but the worst of her is, when it comes to the trimming you have to think for yourself; the woman has no mind; she is a pair of hands, and there is an end of her.' 'I must confess it is a little plain, for one thing,' said Lucy. 'Why, you little goose, you don't think I am going to wear it like this. No; I thought of having down a wreath and bouquet from Foster's of violets and heart's-ease — the bosom and sleeves covered with blonde, you know, and caught here and there with a small bunch of the flowers. The in the centre heart's-ease of the bosom I meant to have had two of my largest diamonds set—hush!' The door-handle worked viciously; then came rap! rap! rap! rap! 'Tic—tic—tic! this is always the way. Who is there? Go away! You can't come here.' 'But I want to speak to you. What the deuce are you doing?' said, through the key-hole, the wretch that owned the room in a mere legal sense. 'We are trying a dress. Come again in an hour.' 'Confound your dress! Who is we?' 'Lucy has got a new dress.' 'Aunt,' whispered Lucy, in a tone of piteous expostulation. 'Oh, if it is Lucy. Well, good-by, ladies. I am obliged to go to London at a moment's notice for a couple of days. You will have done by when I come back, perhaps;' and off went Bazalgette, whistling, but not best pleased. He had told his wife more than once that the drawing-rooms and dining-rooms of a house are the public rooms, and the bedrooms the private ones."

Lucy's Aunt Bazalgette, whose husband is a banker, is determined she shall marry a brilliant financier; her Uncle Fountain, who is cultivating a family tree, has set his mind on her marrying a man of old family, as exemplified in his neighbor Talboys. When she goes to her uncle, he has the long-descended Talboys about

"'GO AWAY! YOU CANNOT COME HERE!'"





the house pretty much all the time, and after a certain evening of him, he rejoices that he never saw her in better spirits.

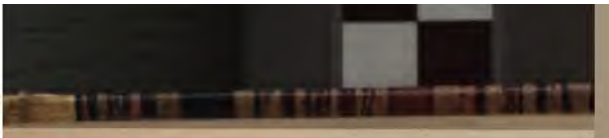
"'I am glad you saw that,' said Lucy, with a languid smile. 'And how Talboys came out.' 'He did,' sighed Lucy. Here the young lady lighted softly on an ottoman, and sunk gracefully back with a weary-o'-the-world air; and when she had settled down like so much floss silk, fixing her eye on the ceiling, and doling her words out languidly yet thoughtfully—just above a whisper: 'Uncle, darling,' inquired she, 'where are the men we have all heard of?' 'How should I know? What men?' 'Where are the men of sentiment, that can understand a woman, and win her to reveal her real heart, the best treasure she has, uncle, dear?' She paused for a reply; none coming, she continued, with decreasing energy: 'Where are the men of spirit? the men of action? the upright, downright men, that Heaven sends to cure us of our disingenuousness? Where are the heroes and the wits?' (an infinitesimal yawn); 'where are the real men? And where are the women to whom such men can do homage without degrading themselves? where are the men who elevate a woman without making her masculine, and the women who can brighten and polish, and yet not soften the steel of manhood—tell me, tell me instantly,' said she, with still greater languor and want of earnestness, and her eyes remained fixed on the ceiling in deep abstraction."

Lucy's aspiration for the heroic aptly prepares the way for David Dodd, who directly appears on the scene with his sister Eve, at one of those teas which replace for them the greater distinction of dinner. He tells stories of his seafaring, and supplies for her the demand she has made of her helpless uncle, and fills the long-felt want of her heart. Of course she knows this before she will own it; and the love-making goes deviously

on and on, but never quite halts, though it often seems to halt. Through it all, Lucy is still Lucy, arming herself for final truth by all sorts of provisional feints, and never failing of a just sense of her sailor's worth in any circumstances. Sometimes her magnanimity is severely tried, as when David, asked to be her aunt's guest, appears among her fine company one day suddenly with his carpet-bag on his shoulder, the boy whom he had paid to carry it proving too weak for the work. Lucy manages so well that she commands her aunt's entire admiration and esteem, which Mrs. Bazalgette confesses in a reading of the girl's nature.

"'If the gentlemen take you for a pane of glass, why, all the better; meantime, shall I tell you your real character? I have only just discovered it myself.' 'Oh, yes, aunt, tell me my character. I should so like to hear it from you.' 'Should you?' said the other, a little satirically; 'well, then, you are an IN-NOCENT FOX!' 'Aunt!' 'An in-no-cent fox; so run and get your work-box. I want you to run up a tear in my flounce.' Lucy went thoughtfully for her work-box, murmuring ruefully, 'I am an in-nocent fox—I am an in-nocent fox.' She did not like her new character at all; it mortified her, and seemed self-contradictory as well as derogatory. On her return she could not help remonstrating: 'How can that be my character? A fox is cunning, and I despise cunning; and *I am sure* I am not *innocent*,' added she, putting up both hands and looking penitent. With all this, a shade of vexation was painted on her lovely cheeks as she appealed against her epigram."

But the innocence of all the foxes in the world cannot save a girl from the love with which she has filled a true man's heart, if she happens to have filled it from her own, and the time has to come when after long twisting and turning to escape him Lucy Fountain is forced





to listen to David Dodd. It is when she comes back to the garden, where she thinks she has left her glove, and finds Dodd on his knees with his face to the ground. She almost runs over him.

"'What *are* you doing, Mr. Dodd?' David arose from his Oriental position, and, being a young man whose impulse always was to tell the simple truth, replied: 'I was kissing the place where you stood so long.' He did not feel that he had done anything extraordinary, so he gave her this information composedly; but her face was scarlet in an instant; and he, seeing that, began to blush too. For once Lucy's tact was baffled; she did not know what on earth to say, and she stood blushing like a girl of fifteen. Then she tried to turn it off. 'Mr. Dodd, how can you be so ridiculous?' said she, affecting humorous disdain. But David was not to be put down now; he was launched. 'I am not ridiculous for loving and worshipping you, for you are worthy of even more love than any human heart can hold.' 'Oh, hush, Mr. Dodd! I must not hear this.' 'Miss Lucy, I can't keep it any longer—you must, you shall hear me. You can despise my love if you will, but you *shall* know it before you reject it.' 'Mr. Dodd, you have every right to be heard, but let me persuade you not to insist. Oh, why did I come back?' 'The first moment I saw you, Miss Lucy, it was a new life to me. I never looked twice at any girl before. It is not your beauty only—oh, no; it is your goodness—goodness such as I never thought was to be found on earth. Don't turn your head from me; I know my defects; could I look on you and not see them? My manners are blunt and rude—oh, how different from yours!—but you could soon make me a fine gentleman, I love you so. And I am only the first mate of an Indiaman; but I should be captain next voyage, Miss Lucy, and a sailor like me has no expenses; all he has is his

wife's. The first lady in the land will not be petted as you will, if you will look kindly on me. Listen to me,' trying to tempt her. 'No, Miss Lucy, I have nothing to offer you worth your acceptance, only my love. No man ever loved woman as I love you; it is not love, it is worship, it is adoration! Ah! she is going to speak to me at last!' Lucy presented at this moment a strange contrast of calmness and agitation. Her bosom heaved quickly, and she was pale, but her voice was calm, and, though gentle, decided. 'I know you love me, Mr. Dodd, and I feared this. I have tried to save you the mortification of being declined by one who, in many things, is your inferior. I have even been rude and unkind to you. Forgive me for it. I meant kindly. I regret it now. Mr. Dodd, I thank you for the honor you do me, but I cannot accept your love.' There was a pause, but David's tongue seemed glued to the roof of his mouth. He was not surprised, yet he was stupefied when the blow came. At last he gasped out: 'You love some other man?' Lucy was silent. 'Answer me, for pity's sake; give me something to help me.' 'You have no right to ask me such a question, but— I have no attachment, Mr. Dodd.' 'Ah! then one word more; is it because you cannot love me, or because I am poor, and only first mate of an Indiaman?' '*That* I will not answer. You have no right to question a lady why she— Stay! you wish to despise me. Well, why not, if that will cure you of this unfortunate— Think what you please of me, Mr. Dodd,' murmured Lucy, sadly. 'Ah! you know I can't,' cried David, despairingly. 'I know that you esteem me more than I deserve. Well, I esteem you, Mr. Dodd. Why, then, can we not be friends? You have only to promise me you will never return to this subject—come!' 'Me promise not to love you! What is the use? Me be your friend, and nothing more, and stand looking on at

MR. KANE SEES BEG HIGHFINGTON FOR THE FIRST TIME

the heaven that is to be another's, and never to be mine? It is my turn to decline. Never. Betrothed lovers or strangers, but nothing between! . . . Shall I go now?' 'Yes,' murmured Lucy, softly, trying to disarm the fatal word. 'Forget me—and—forgive me!' and, with this last word scarce audible, she averted her face, and held out her hand with angelic dignity, modesty, and pity. The kind words and the gentle action brought down the stout heart that had looked death in the face so often without flinching. 'Forgive you, sweet angel!' he cried; 'I pray Heaven to bless you, and to make you as happy as I am desolate for your sake. Oh, you show me more and more what I lose this day. God bless you! God bless—' and David's heart filled to choking, and he burst out sobbing despairingly, and the hot tears ran suddenly from his eyes over her hand as he kissed and kissed it. Then, with an almost savage feeling of shame (for these were not eyes that were wont to weep), he uttered one cry of despair and ran away, leaving her pale and panting heavily. She looked at her hand, wet with a hero's tears, and for the second time her own began to gush."

No intelligent reader would suppose this was the end, although he had not already been told that the lovers are securely wedded before the tale is done. Their story is subordinately prolonged, as we all know, through "Very Hard Cash," and I do not think that there is anything Mrs. David Dodd says or does in that rather inferior book to decharacterize Miss Lucy Fountain. That girl is a great invention, and if it is true, as I have several times contended in these papers, that a novelist's power is to be tested largely by his success in dealing with feminine nature, I do not see why I have called Charles Reade a minor novelist. It must be that the offences of his manner and the impertinences of his method have weighed too heavily with me. It

is certain that these are so many and so grievous that a far more lenient critic might find them damnatory.

## IV

Lucy Fountain is of the same type of heroine as Helen Rolleston in "Foul Play," and the heroine of "A Terrible Temptation." There is another type, the frankly honest, or the almost frankly honest, type which he deals with in Christie Johnstone in the novel of her name, and Katharine Gaunt in "Griffith Gaunt," and Margaret in "The Cloister and the Hearth," and Grace Carden in "Put Yourself in His Place;" but each of these has some little hint or tint of the Lucy Fountain type in her, which is perhaps nothing, after all, but the ultimate and inevitable expression of her femininity. Possibly when women are quite equal in their chances and conditions with men they will cease to be innocent foxes; but in the meantime we must be glad and grateful when they are innocent.

Still another type of heroine in Charles Reade's fiction is that supremely illustrated by the titulary heroine of "Peg Woffington." If such heroines could always be openly or professionally of the theatre, we should have no right to object that they are mechanical. Actresses are and must be so entirely subservient to the exigencies of the stage that they end by exchanging their nature for its artifice, and in the highest effects of character deliver a *coup de théâtre*. It is not that they stab the potatoes; but that they peel or mash them with one eye on the public; or that they conceive of nothing sublimer than eating a poisoned potato so that their rivals may marry the men they love. It is not their fault, poor things: they have been so warped by their art that they cannot imagine anything finer than the devices with

which they have brought down houses; or their inventors cannot imagine it for them, which is quite as bad in effect.

Charles Reade was of a better theatre than Charles Dickens, but he was of the theatre; and you seem to be reading a dramatization of his novels, rather than the novels themselves. Yet they are ingenious, brilliant, witty, and abound in true suggestions of femininity; and their heroines merit much more attention than can be given them in a single paper.

## VARIATIONS OF READE'S TYPE OF HEROINES

THE absence of anything like a philosophic criticism in England must account for the antics and aberrations of English novelists who were greatly gifted but wholly undisciplined, and who let themselves go to the bounds of their eccentricities because they were aware of no law that they need stand in fear of. Several of the greatest, like Jane Austen, Anthony Trollope, Thomas Hardy, and George Moore, have been so admirably tempered by nature that they could not help being artists, worthy of any Continental school, amidst the prevailing æsthetic anarchy of their native island, where there is no school, where criticism is arbitrary and personal, where there are no ideals, but only standards; no principles, but only preferences. I have to note the lamentable results of these conditions in the case of nearly all the English novelists except those I have named; in the case of such a novelist as Charles Reade, a powerful but most wilful talent, they are comically disastrous; the final complexion of their tragedy is *bouffe*.

Charles Reade was as nobly intentioned as any novelist who has written; he imagined his vocation to be painting truly from nature; to be, as Mr. James defines the office of fiction, the representation of life. Yet for want of a principled criticism he could never understand that the painter has no business in the picture, the dramatist has no business on the stage. He is forever at your elbow as you read, audibly directing your at-

tention to this and that surprising fact; winking to you, sticking his tongue in his cheek, and clucking to make you notice. He is not as bad as Thackeray, who spoils the illusion by whispering you that the whole thing is make-believe; he is faithful to his own fancy, at least; but he is of a worse literary taste, and in his anxiety to show you how full of drama the real world is, he drags in raw Incident by the hair, and makes a newspaper of his page.

## I

Charles Reade was not helplessly a dramatist like Charles Dickens, who brought the theatre into life; but he saw life so dramatically that he was consciously arranging it for the theatre at every moment; and his novels were often confessedly, as eventually they often became, plays, and very good plays. I have seldom seen a better melodrama than "Foul Play," which is also a most delightful story, with a heroine in Helen Rolleston, who is of the author's very best sort, and almost fit to match with Margaret in "The Cloister and the Hearth." Margaret, indeed, is his finest creation, being less mechanically operated, less of a Jill-in-the-Box, more vitalized from within, than the others. She is very sweet and simple and noble, and is found a true woman in that remote mediæval twilight where she obediently abides, without insubordinately getting over into the glare of modern times, as people in historical novels are apt to do.

Upon the whole, I think that book Charles Reade's greatest book—at least in a show of the past, which must always be a gymnastic; his ground and lofty tumbling is not so offensive there as it is amidst a representation of actual life. But all his novels bear

reading again after many years; they are no more boyish now than they were at first; they were never as deep as wells nor as wide as church doors, but they served: served to surprise, to amuse, almost to convince. "A Terrible Temptation" is a mighty good book, with a charming heroine; and "Put Yourself in His Place" is another. So is "Griffith Gaunt;" Katharine Gaunt is finely imagined; "It is Never Too Late to Mend" is a good story, but the heroine has not remained with me. I dare say she would come back with a little coaxing.

## II

I am not sure whether "Peg Woffington" is to be put among the author's minor works or not; but as an historical novel, dealing with the nature of an actress, it has every chance of falling very low in the scale of fiction. Perhaps, however, one condition of unreality offsets the other, and the theatricality neutralizes the historicality. At any rate, the result is a story which, if not true, is such a story as every actress could wish to be true. What better could the histrionic heart desire than the case of a country gentleman leaving his young bride behind him, and coming for a few days on business up to London, where he falls in love with the divine Mistress Woffington, and remains wooing and winning her for weeks and months, till the neglected wife follows him to town, and finds him giving a dinner to La Peg (as Reade would call her), and throws herself on Mistress Woffington's mercy? There is a situation which no woman need be long upon the stage to find exquisitely natural; if you add the fact that Peg has never known her lover was married, it is almost *too* natural. For the *éclaircissement* what could be more profitable and feasible than for Mabel Vane to seek her rival in the

studio of the scene-painter who is doing her portrait, and there succeed an audience of connoisseurs who have been trapped into criticising Mrs. Woffington's real face in the hole cut out of the canvas where the painted face was? The connoisseurs have been mocked and driven out by the actress, who has hidden behind her portrait when the hapless wife appears, and who now puts back her face into the hole in the canvas, the better to witness the scene between the painter and her rival. Mrs. Vane pours out her artless tale of grief to the powerless Triplet, and avows her purpose of trying to see Mrs. Woffington, and appeal to her as her sole hope.

"At this moment, in spite of Triplet's precaution, Mrs. Vane, casting her eye accidentally round, caught sight of the picture, and instantly started up, crying, 'She is there!' Triplet was thunderstruck. 'What a likeness!' cried she, and moved towards the supposed picture. 'Don't go to it!' cried Triplet, aghast; 'the color is wet.' She stopped; but her eye and her very soul dwelt upon the supposed picture; and Triplet stood quaking. 'How like! It seems to breathe. You are a great painter, sir. A glass is not truer.' Triplet, hardly knowing what he said, muttered something about 'critics and lights and shades.' 'Then they are blind!' cried Mabel, never for a moment removing her eye from the object. 'Tell me not of lights and shades. The pictures I see have a look of paint; but yours looks like life. O that she were here, as this *wonderful* image of hers is. I would speak to her. I am not wise or learned; but orators never pleaded as I would plead to her for my Ernest's heart.' Still her eye glanced upon the picture; and I suppose her heart realized an actual presence, though her judgment did not; for by some irresistible impulse she sank slowly down and stretched her clasped hands towards it, while sobs and words seemed to break direct from her bursting heart. 'O yes!

you are beautiful, you are gifted, and the eyes of thousands wait upon your very word and look. What wonder that he, ardent, refined, and genial, should lay his heart at your feet? And I have nothing but my love to make him love me. I cannot take him from you. O, be generous to the weak! O, give him back to me! What is one heart more to you? You are so rich, and I am so poor, that without his love I have nothing, and can do nothing but sit me down and cry till my heart breaks. Give him back to me, beautiful, terrible woman! for, with all your gifts, you cannot love him as his poor Mabel does; and I will love you longer perhaps than men can love. I will kiss your feet, and Heaven above will bless you; and I will bless you and pray for you to my dying day. Ah! it is alive! I am frightened! I am frightened!' She ran to Triplet and seized his arm. 'No!' cried she, quivering close to him; 'I'm not frightened, for it was for me she— O Mrs. Woffington!' and, hiding her face on Mr. Triplet's shoulder, she blushed, and wept, and trembled. What was it had betrayed Mrs. Woffington? *A tear!* During the whole of this interview (which had taken a turn so unlooked for by the listener) she might have said with Beatrice, 'What fire is in mine ears?' and what self-reproach and chill misgiving in her heart too. She had passed through a hundred emotions, as the young innocent wife told her sad and simple story. But, anxious now above all things to escape without being recognized,—for she had long repented having listened at all, or placed herself in her present position,—she fiercely mastered her countenance; but, though she ruled her features, she could not rule her heart. And when the young wife, instead of inveighing against her, came to her as a supplicant, with faith in her goodness, and sobbed to her for pity, a big tear rolled down her cheek, and proved her something more than a picture

"BY SOME IRRESISTIBLE IMPULSE SHE SANK SLOWLY DOWN"

or an actress. Mrs. Vane, as we have related, screamed and ran to Triplet. Mrs. Woffington came instantly from her frame, and stood before them in a despairing attitude, with one hand upon her brow. For a single moment her impulse was to fly from the apartment, so ashamed was she of having listened, and of meeting her rival in this way; but she conquered this feeling, and, as soon as she saw Mrs. Vane too had recovered some composure, she said to Triplet, in a low but firm voice: 'Leave us, sir. No living creature must hear what I say to this lady!'"

III

This is quite as an actress would wish things to be; and they fall out in this wise so often on the stage that the great wonder is they have never begun falling out so in life yet. The time must come for that if the stage only keeps on; and in the meanwhile it must be owned that in the less dramatic moments of the story the nature of La Peg (it is impossible to escape the contagion of the author's example) is studied much more in the light of fact. She is of really a far simpler nature than many women who are actresses merely off the stage. The actress has had her disillusions, but she lives in a world of illusions, and when one is gone she goes and gets more from the vast property-room of fable. Without having been a very good woman, Reade's Peg Woffington is never so bad as not to wish being better: she has her dream of being purely loved, and is willing to love so again, and in her trust of Vane she has given him her heart. That is the pity of it, and the probability; but there perhaps the fable parts company with fact. Would the actress in real life (if she is ever there) give back the foolish husband to the faithful wife? This

may be too much to ask of any one profession; but in the world at large would she do it? This may be too much to ask of any one sex.

Probability was what Reade was always trying to get away from, and he justified himself by the example of reality as recorded in the manifold incidents of the voluminous scrap-books of newspaper cuttings which he kept. His simple philosophy was that the marvellous, the bizarre, the high-heroic, the monstrous, was fit material for art because it was to be found in experience, and that it was preferable to the wonted aspect of life. So his books, put together of characters and events which could every one be matched in contemporaneous history, and wearing the air of lively reality, fail to convince the reader that the things in them happened, or persuade him no longer than a thrilling passage on the stage.

People were very primitive in the early fifties, and author and public both accepted a convention of fiction which no author or public of prime quality would accept now, though it still embodies the creed of those who write and read the novels which sell their half-millions to-day. In Reade's books it is a comedy-convention, for except "The Cloister and the Hearth," the greatest of them all, they all "end well," and we are expected to suppose every manner of substantiated facts which would be important if true. The range of his later novels includes many exciting interests, such as deportations and shipwrecks, labor strikes, abuses in private insane asylums, and doings in gold-diggings; but, after all, these have not the charm of such an earlier story as "Christie Johnstone," which deals with a series of sweet impossibilities among gentlefolk and simple folk in the little Scotch fishing-town of Newhaven. It is such a very early book that I may safely trust the elder reader's oblivion and the younger reader's igno-

rance for my excuse if I briefly sketch the plot. Lord Ipsden, crossed in love with his cousin Lady Barbara, and sick from it, goes down to Newhaven with a famous doctor's prescription directing him to get well by doing good among the poor, just about the time that Charles Gatty, a youthful artist, full of the new truth that you must paint life from life, has set up his easel in the same port, and has there given his heart for that of Christie Johnstone, the prettiest fishing-lass of the place. Lord Ipsden does good right and left with an unsparing hand in drawing checks; he early makes the acquaintance of Christie, and at a hint from her goes and buys pictures of Gatty, who is on the point of imprisonment for debt, at the same time that Christie herself surprises a school of herring unknown to other fisher-folk, and comes to her lover with the money for them. But before this, Gatty's mother, who has been a cook and is a cockney, has heard of Christie, and has appeared to prevent his marrying beneath him. Through Lord Ipsden's beneficence she is able to thank Christie kindly and tell her that she and her son do not need her herring money, and nothing then remains for Christie to do but to save Gatty's life, and she promptly manages this by putting out in her boat, and rescuing him from a flood-tide, such as is apt to overtake people in fiction. His mother then naturally gives way, and at the same moment Lady Barbara, who has always wanted to marry an earnest man, convinces herself of Lord Ipsden's earnestness and marries him.

## IV

In order to begin doing good as soon as possible, Lord Ipsden has his valet go out and get him some of the lower orders directly after his arrival in Newhaven;

and Saunders returns with Christie Johnstone and her friend Jean Carnie.

"On their heads they wore caps of Dutch or Flemish origin, with a broad lace border, stiffened and arched over the forehead, about three inches high, leaving the brow and cheeks unencumbered. They had cotton jackets, bright red and yellow, mixed in patterns, confined at the waist by the apron-strings, but bobtailed below the waist; short woollen petticoats, with broad vertical stripes, red and white, most vivid in color; white worsted stockings, and neat, though high-quartered, shoes. Under their jackets they wore a thick spotted cotton handkerchief, about one inch of which was visible round the lower part of the throat. Of their petticoats, the outer one was kilted, or gathered up towards the front, and the second, of the same color, hung in the usual way. Of these young women, one had an olive complexion, with the red blood mantling under it, and black hair, and glorious black eyebrows. The other was fair, with a massive but shapely throat, as white as milk; glossy brown hair, the loose threads of which glittered like gold, and a blue eye, which, being contrasted with dark eyebrows and lashes, took the luminous effect peculiar to that rare beauty. Their short petticoats revealed a neat ankle, and a leg with a noble swell; for Nature, when she is in earnest, builds beauty on the ideals of ancient sculptors and poets, not of modern poetasters, who, with their airy-like sylphs and their smokelike verses, fight for want of flesh in woman and want of fact in poetry as parallel beauties. *They are*, my lads.—*Continuez!* These women had a grand corporeal trait; they had never known a corset! so they were straight as javelins; they could lift their hands above their heads!—actually! Their supple persons moved as Nature intended; every gesture was ease, grace, and freedom. What with their own radiance,

and the snowy cleanliness and brightness of their costume, they came like meteors into the apartment. Lord Ipsden, rising gently from his seat, with the same quiet politeness with which he would have received two princes of the blood, said, 'How do you do?' and smiled a welcome. 'Fine! hoow's yoursel?' answered the dark lass, whose name was Jean Carnie, and whose voice was not so sweet as her face. 'What 'n lord are ye?' continued she; 'are you a juke? I wad like fine to hae a crack wi' a juke.' Saunders who knew himself the cause of this question, replied, *sotto voce*, 'His Lordship is a viscount.' 'I didna ken 't,' was Jean's remark. 'But it has a bonny soond.' 'What mair would ye hae?' said the fair beauty, whose name was Christie Johnstone. Then, appealing to his Lordship as the likeliest to know, she added, 'Nobeelity is just a soond itsel, I'm tauld.' The Viscount, finding himself expected to say something on a topic he had not attended much to, answered dryly: 'We must ask the republicans; they are the people that give their minds to such subjects.' . . . The fair lass, who had watched the Viscount all this time as demurely as a cat cream, now approached him. This young woman was the thinker; her voice was also rich, full, and melodious, and her manner very engaging; it was half advancing, half retiring, not easy to resist or to describe. 'Noo,' said she, with a very slight blush stealing across her face, 'ye maun let me catecheeze ye, wull ye?' The last two words were said in a way that would have induced a bear to reveal his winter residence. He smiled assent. Saunders retired to the door, and, excluding every shade of curiosity from his face, took an attitude, half majesty, half obsequiousness. Christie stood by Lord Ipsden, with one hand on her hip (the knuckles downwards), but graceful as Antinous, and began. 'Hoo muckle is the Queen greater than y' are?' His Lordship was

obliged to reflect. 'Let me see,—as is the moon to a wax taper, so is her Majesty the Queen to you and me, and the rest.' . . . 'Noo,' said the fair inquisitor, 'ye shall tell me how ye came to be Lorrds, your faemily?' . . . 'Five hundred years ago—' 'Listen, Jean,' said Christie; 'we're gaun to get a boeny story. "Five hundre' years ago,"' added she, with interest and awe. 'Was a great battle,' resumed the narrator, in cheerful tones, as one larking with history, 'between a King of England and his rebels. He was in the thick of the fight—' 'That's the King, Jean, he was in the thick o't.' 'My ancestor killed a fellow who was sneaking behind him, but the next moment a man-at-arms prepared a thrust at his Majesty, who had his hands full with three assailants.' 'Eh! that's no fair,' said Christie, 'as sure as deeth.' 'My ancestor dashed forward, and, as the king's sword passed through one of them, he clove another to the waist with a blow.' 'Weel done! weel done! . . . Aweel, I hae gotten a heap out o' ye; sae noow I'll gang, since ye are no for herrin'; come away, Jean.' At this their host remonstrated, and inquired why bores are at one's service night and day, and bright people are always in a hurry; he was informed in reply, 'Labor is the lot o' man. Div ye no ken that muckle? And abune a' o' women.' 'Why, what can two such pretty creatures have to do except to be admired?' This question coming within the dark beauty's scope, she hastened to reply. 'To sell our herrin',—we hae three hundre' left in the creel.' 'What is the price?' At this question the poetry died out of Christie Johnstone's face, she gave her companion a rapid look, indiscernible by male eye, and answered: 'Three a penny, sirr; they are no plenty the day,' added she, in smooth tones that carried conviction. (Little liar; they were selling six a penny everywhere.) 'Saunders, buy them all, and be ever so long about it;

count them, or some nonsense.' 'He's daft! he's daft! O, ye ken, Jean, an Englishman and a lorrd, twa daft things thegither, he could na' miss the road. Coont them, lassie.' 'Come away, Sandy, till I count them till ye,' said Jean. Saunders and Jean disappeared. Business being out of sight, curiosity revived. 'An' what brings ye here from London, if ye please?' recommenced the fair inquisitor. 'You have a good countenance; there is something in your face. I could find it in my heart to tell you, but I should bore you.' 'De'el a fear! Bore me, bore me! whaat's thaat, I wonder?' 'What is your name, madam? Mine is Ipsden.' 'They ca' me Christie Johnstone.' 'Well, Christie Johnstone, I am under the doctor's hands.' 'Puir lad. What's the trouble?' (solemnly and tenderly). 'Ennui!' (rather piteously). 'Yawn-we? I never heerd tell o't.' 'O you lucky girl,' burst out he; 'but the doctor has undertaken to cure me; in one thing you could assist me, if I am not presuming too far on our short acquaintance. I am to relieve one poor distressed person every day, but I mustn't do two: is not that a bore?' 'Gie 's your hand, gie 's your hand. I'm vexed for ca'ing you daft. Hech! what a saft hand ye hae. Jean, I'm saying, come here, feel this.' Jean, who had run in, took the Viscount's hand from Christie. 'It never wroucht any,' explained Jean. 'And he has bonny hair,' said Christie, just touching his locks on the other side. 'He's a bonny lad,' said Jean, inspecting him scientifically and point-blank."

Of course, this is playing to the gallery openly, but not so very grossly, and although the human nature is as impossible as the wit and caprice in the circumstances, it is still human nature. It represents the heroine in thoughtful repose; but if the reader is of a mind to see her in high dramatic action, here is the scene of her rescuing Gatty from the

high tide, to which he has heedlessly committed himself.

"The poor fellow, whom Sandy, by aid of his glass, now discovered to be in a worn-out condition, was about half a mile east of Newhaven pier-head, and unfortunately the wind was nearly due east. Christie was standing north-northeast, her boat-hook jammed against the sail, which stood as flat as a knife. The natives of the Old Town were now seen pouring down to the pier and the beach, and strangers were collecting like bees. . . . 'That boat is not going to the poor man,' said Mrs. Gatty, 'it is turning its back upon him.' 'She canna lie in the wind's eye, for as clever as she is,' answered a fish-wife. 'I ken wha it is,' suddenly squeaked a little fish-wife; 'it's Christie Johnstone's lad; it's yon daft painter fr' England. Hech!' cried she suddenly, observing Mrs. Gatty, 'it's your son, woman.' The unfortunate woman gave a fearful scream, and, flying like a tiger on Liston, commanded him to 'go straight out to sea and save her son.' Jean Carnie seized her arm. 'Div ye see yon boat?' cried she; 'and div ye mind Christie, the lass wha's hairt ye hae broken? aweel, woman,—*it's just a race between deeth and Cirsty Johnstone for your son.*' The poor old woman swooned dead away; they carried her into Christie Johnstone's house, and laid her down, then hurried back,—the greater terror absorbed the less. Lady Barbara Sinclair was there from Leith; and seeing Lord Ipsden standing in the boat with a fisherman, she asked him to tell her what it was; neither he nor any one answered her. 'Why doesn't she come about, Liston?' cried Lord Ipsden, stamping with anxiety and impatience. 'She'll no be lang,' said Sandy; 'but they'll mak a mess o' 't wi' ne'er a man i' the boat.' 'Ye're sure o' thaat?' put in a woman. 'Ay, about she comes,' said Liston, as the sail came down on the first tack. He

was mistaken; they dipped the lug as cleverly as any man in the town could. 'Hech! look at her hauling on the rope like a mon,' cried a woman. The sail flew up on the other tack. . . . 'She'll no let him dee. Ah! she's in the bows, hailing him an' waving the lad's bonnet ower her head to gie him coorage. Gude bless ye, lass; Gude bless ye!' Christie knew it was no use hailing him against the wind, but the moment she got the wind she darted into the bows, and pitched in its highest key her full and brilliant voice; after a moment of suspense she received proof that she must be heard by him, for on the pier now hung men and women, clustered like bees, breathless with anxiety, and the moment after she hailed the drowning man she saw and heard a wild yell of applause burst from the pier, and the pier was more distant than the man. She snatched Flucker's cap, planted her foot on the gunwale, held on by a rope, hailed the poor fellow again, and waved the cap round and round her head, to give him courage; and in a moment, at the sight of this, thousands of voices thundered back their cheers to her across the water. Blow, wind,—spring, boat,—and you, Christie, still ring life towards those despairing ears, and wave hope to those sinking eyes; cheer the boat on, you thousands that look upon this action; hurrah! from the pier; hurrah! from the town; hurrah! from the shore; hurrah! now, from the very ships in the roads, whose crews are swarming on the yards to look; five minutes ago they laughed at you; three thousand eyes and hearts hang upon you now; ay, these are the moments we live for! . . . And now dead silence. The boat is within fifty yards, they are all three consulting together round the mast; an error now is death; his forehead only seems above water. 'If they miss him on that tack?' said Lord Ipsden, significantly, to Liston. 'He'll never see London Brigg again,' was the whispered reply. They

carried on till all on shore thought they would run over him, or past him; but no, at ten yards distant they were all at the sail, and had it down like lightning; and then Flucker sprang to the bows, the other boy to the helm. Unfortunately, there were but two Johnstones in the boat; and this boy, in his hurry, actually put the helm to port, instead of to starboard. Christie, who stood amidships, saw the error; she sprang aft, flung the boy from the helm, and jammed it hard a-starboard with her foot. The boat answered the helm, but too late for Flucker; the man was four yards from him as the boat drifted by. 'He's a deed mon!' cried Liston, on shore. The boat's length gave one more little chance; the after-part must drift nearer him,—thanks to Christie. Flucker flew aft; flung himself on his back, and seized his sister's petticoats. 'Fling yourself over the gunwale,' screamed he. 'Ye'll no hurt; I'se haud ye.' She flung herself boldly over the gunwale; the man was sinking, her nails touched his hair, her fingers entangled themselves in it, she gave him a powerful wrench and brought him alongside; the boys pinned him like wild-cats. Christie darted away forward to the mast, passed a rope round it, threw it the boys, in a moment it was under his shoulders. Christie hauled on it from the fore-thwart, the boys lifted him, and they tumbled him, gasping and gurgling like a dying salmon, into the bottom of the boat, and flung net and jackets and sail over him, to keep the life in him."

## V

Dickens created a new school, or rather he characterized every young writer of his generation; and in a less measure Thackeray did the like. But Reade had no imitators and left none, though in certain things he was cleverer than either of these betters of his. He

knew women better than they, and he could paint their manners, if not their minds, better than both his betters put together.

Why should I say his betters? If I do I am again controverting my prime position that the highest type of novelist is he who can most winningly impart the sense of womanhood. Charles Reade could do this beyond Dickens and beyond Thackeray; and so let the fact praise him as it may.

## GEORGE ELIOT'S MAGGIE TULLIVER AND HETTY SORREL

IN George Eliot we come to the greatest talent in English fiction after Jane Austen, but a talent of vastly wider and deeper reach than that delicate and delightful artist, and of a far more serious import. It is useless to compare any of her contemporaries with this great woman in the expectation of finding them her equals except in that poorer expression which was from their singularities rather than their qualities. Neither Dickens with his dramatic, or theatric, picturesqueness, nor Thackeray with his moralized mockery, his sentimentalized satire, nor Reade with his self-celebrated discoveries in character and manners, nor Anthony Trollope with his immense, quiet, ruminant reality, ox-like cropping the field of English life and converting its succulent juices into the nourishing beef of his fiction—none of these writers can match with the author of "Adam Bede" and "The Mill on the Floss" and "Romola" and "Middlemarch" in the things which give a novelist the highest claim to the reader's interest. Hawthorne, arriving at effects of equal seriousness from a quarter so opposite to hers, among her contemporaries can alone rival her in the respect, not to say the reverence, of criticism. It was not till the wide canvases of Thomas Hardy began to glow with the light and color, the mystery and the comedy and tragedy with which he best knows how to paint, and which became the expression of a supreme mastery in his "Jude"—it was not till these appeared

that it could be felt George Eliot had a peer in late English fiction. But if there is a power in the Christianity which she disowned but which never disowned her, profounder than the farthest reach of fatalism, even Mr. Hardy cannot stand beside her. She had many and lamentable defects; the very seriousness and sincerity of her motive implied them; her learning over-weighted her knowledge; her conscience clogged her art; her strong grasp of human nature was weakened by foibles of manner; the warmth of her womanly sympathies and the subtlety of her womanly intuitions failed of their due effect because the sympathies were sometimes hysterical and the intuitions were sometimes over-intellectualized. Her immense reading, which freed her from the worst influences of the English example in fiction, cumbered her with pedantic acquisitions, under which her style labored conscious and diffuse; her just sense of her own power fostered a kind of intellectual vanity, fatal to art, in which she first-personally intruded herself into the story, and Thackerayesquely commented upon the facts and persons without the Thackerayesque lightness, or the Thackerayesque convention that it is all a make-believe anyway. This foible becomes positive, offensive, and pernicious in "The Mill on the Floss," but it is right to add that it has there its worst effect, and that in later stories it gradually disappears.

## I

If we choose Maggie Tulliver for the representative woman of George Eliot, as we chose Lucy Fountain in the case of Charles Reade, we shall at least be going no farther wrong, I think. She is at any rate typical of that order of heroine which her author most strongly imagined, not quite upon the Miltonian formula for

a poem of "simple, sensuous, passionate," but upon such a variation of it as should read complex, sensuous, passionate. She is, of all the kinds of heroines, the most difficult for men justly to appreciate, and in their failure something of the ignoble slight they feel for her attaches also to her creator. They are ashamed for a woman who could give herself with her heart as passionately as they seek women without their hearts. The fact will not be easily put into words, and if it be forced it demands terms too plain for print; but it underlies the vital difference between the grosser make of men and the finer make of women. Above all others Tolstoy has suggested it in the Natasha Rostoff in his "War and Peace"; but most novelists shy off from it, leaving their readers to make what they can of the recorded events; and in English fiction George Eliot has alone recognized it so recognizably as not to leave it to the reader. Her heroines' souls are incarnate in bodies that glow with passion none the less but all the more pure because it is a flame. Maggie Tulliver, conscientious, intellectual, is compact of it; Dorothea Casaubon in "Middlemarch" loves Ladislaw from it, as Romola loves Tito Melema in the romance of her name; poor little Hetty Sorrel in "Adam Bede" is betrayed as much by it as by her vanity; Dinah Morris herself is not without it; in "Daniel Deronda" Gwendolen Harleth is redeemed by it, at least in the reader's pity.

## II

It is by her nature, complex, passionate, sensuous, by her sex, intellectualized and spiritualized, that she is most important to the reader. In her relations to her brother, which are apparently the chief interest of the book, she is interestingly and novelly studied; but

these, though they involve the catastrophe, do not involve the climax. That is reached, as it seems to me, not when she and Tom are drowned together in the flood of the Floss, but when her reason and her conscience are provisionally overborne by her love for Stephen Guest, and she floats with him down a tide and out upon a sea more perilous than any inundation, and saves herself only by a powerful impulse of her will, which is almost a convulsion. The fruition of her love would have been a double treason, treason to her cousin Lucy, who was Guest's betrothed, and treason to Philip Waken, to whom she was herself pledged; and the sense of this blackened it with guilt, and turned it to despair, even while she yielded and yielded to the love of being loved. Never has an unhappy passion been more faithfully studied in a character with strength enough finally to forbid it; or more subtly felt from that first moment when Maggie begins to rejoice in her beauty because of her love for the man who loves it, till that last moment when she refuses to marry him, and goes back to suffer shame rather than to merit shame. Every step of the way is accurately and firmly traced up to that passage where Stephen Guest comes to ask her to row with him on the river, and from which there seems no retreat.

"'Oh, we can't go,' said Maggie, sinking into her chair again. 'Lucy did not expect—she would be hurt. Why is not Philip come?' 'He is not well; he asked me to come instead.' 'Lucy is gone to Lindum,' said Maggie, taking off her bonnet, with hurried, trembling fingers. 'We must not go.' 'Very well,' said Stephen, dreamily, looking at her, as he rested his arm on the back of his chair. 'Then we'll stay here.' He was looking into her deep, deep eyes—far off and mysterious as the starlit blackness, and yet very near and timidly loving. Maggie sat perfectly still, perhaps for moments, perhaps for minutes—until the helpless

trembling had ceased, and there was a warm glow on her cheek. . . . 'Let us go,' Stephen murmured, entreatingly, rising, and taking her hand to raise her too. 'We shall not be long together.' And they went. Maggie felt that she was being led down the garden among the roses, being helped with firm, tender care into the boat, having the cushion and cloak arranged for her feet, and her parasol opened for her (which she had forgotten)—all by this stronger presence that seemed to bear her along without any act of her own will, like the added self which comes with the sudden exalting influence of a strong tonic—and she felt nothing else. Memory was excluded. . . . 'Oh, have we passed Luckreth—where we were to stop?' she exclaimed, looking back to see if the place were out of sight. No village was to be seen. She turned round again, with a look of distressed questioning at Stephen. He went on watching the water, and said in a strange, dreamy, absent tone, 'Yes, a long way.' 'Oh, what shall I do?' cried Maggie in an agony. 'We shall not get home for hours—and Lucy—O God, help me!' She clasped her hands and broke into a sob, like a frightened child: she thought of nothing but of meeting Lucy, and seeing her look of pained surprise and doubt—perhaps of just upbraiding. Stephen moved and sat near her, and gently drew down the clasped hands. 'Maggie,' he said, in a deep tone of slow decision, 'let us never go home again—till no one can part us—till we are married.' The unusual tone, the startling words, arrested Maggie's sob, and she sat quite still—wondering: as if Stephen might have seen some possibilities that would alter everything, and annul the wretched facts. . . . 'Let me go!' she said, in an agitated tone, flashing an indignant look at him, and trying to get her hands free. 'You have wanted to deprive me of any choice. You knew we were come too far—you

have dared to take advantage of my thoughtlessness. It is unmanly to bring me into such a position.' Stung by this reproach, he released her hands, moved back to his former place, and folded his arms, in a sort of desperation at the difficulty Maggie's words had made present to him. The indignant fire in her eyes was quenched, and she began to look at him with timid distress. She had reproached him for being hurried into irrevocable trespass—she, who had been so weak herself. 'As if I shouldn't feel what happened to you—just the same,' she said, with reproach of another kind —the reproach of love, asking for more trust. This yielding to the idea of Stephen's suffering was more fatal than the other yielding, because it was less distinguishable from that sense of others' claims which was the moral basis of her resistance. He felt all the relenting in her look and tone—it was heaven opening again. He moved to her side, and took her hand, leaning his elbow on the back of the boat, and saying nothing. They glided along in this way, both resting in that silence as in a haven, both dreading lest their feelings should be divided again—till they became aware that the clouds had gathered, and that the slightest perceptible freshening of the breeze was growing and growing, so that the whole character of the day was altered. 'You will be chill, Maggie, in this thin dress. Let me raise the cloak over your shoulders. Get up an instant, dearest.' Maggie obeyed: there was an unspeakable charm in being told what to do, and having everything decided for her. . . . Presently Stephen observed a vessel coming after them. . . . 'Maggie, dearest,' he said, at last, 'if this vessel should be going to Mudport, or to any convenient place on the coast northward, it would be our best plan to get them to take us on board.' Maggie's heart began to beat with reawakened alarm at this new proposition;

but she was silent; one course seemed as difficult as another. Stephen hailed the vessel. It was a Dutch vessel going to Mudport, the English mate informed him, and, if this wind held out, would be there in less than two days. . . . Maggie was to sleep all night in the poop; it was better than going below; and she was covered with the warmest wrappings the ship could furnish. It was still early, when the fatigues of the day brought on a drowsy longing for perfect rest, and she laid down her head, looking at the faint dying flush in the west, where the one golden lamp was getting brighter and brighter. Then she looked up at Stephen, who was still seated by her, hanging over her as he leaned against the vessel's side. Behind all the delicious visions of these last hours, which had flowed over her like a soft stream, and made her entirely passive, there was the dim consciousness that the condition was a transient one, and that the morrow must bring back the old life of struggle—that there were thoughts which would presently avenge themselves for this oblivion. . . . Daybreak came and the reddening eastern light, while her past life was grasping her in this way, with that tightening clutch which comes in the last moments of possible rescue. She could see Stephen now lying on the deck still fast asleep, and with the sight of him there came a wave of anguish that found its way in a long, suppressed sob. . . . 'Here we are in sight of Mudport,' he said, at last. 'Now dearest,' he added, turning toward her with a look that was half beseeching, 'the worst part of your fatigue is over On the land we can command swiftness. In another hour and a half we shall be in a chaise together —and that will seem rest to you after this.' Maggie felt it was time to speak; it would only be unkind now to assent by silence. She spoke in the lowest tone, as he had done, but with distinct decision. 'We shall not

be together—we shall have parted.' The blood rushed to Stephen's face. 'We shall not,' he said. 'I'll die first.' It was as he had dreamed—there was a struggle coming. But neither of them dared to say another word, till the boat was let down, and they were taken to the landing-place. . . . A porter guided them to the nearest inn and posting-house, and Stephen gave the order for the chaise as they passed through the yard. Maggie took no notice of this, and only said, 'Ask them to show us into a room where we can sit down. We must not wait,' she said, in a low but distinct voice; 'we must part at once.' 'We will not part,' Stephen burst out, instinctively placing his back against the door—forgetting everything he had said a few moments before; 'I will not endure it. You'll make me desperate —I sha'n't know what I do.' Maggie trembled. . . . Her heart beat like the heart of a frightened bird; but this direct opposition helped her. She felt her determination growing stronger. 'Maggie! Dearest! If you love me, you are mine. Who can have so great a claim on you as I have? My life is bound up in your love. There is nothing in the past that can annul our right to each other; it is the first time we have either of us loved with our whole heart and soul.' Maggie was still silent for a little while—looking down. Stephen was in a flutter of new hope; he was going to triumph. But she raised her eyes and met his with a glance that was filled with the anguish of regret—not with yielding. 'No—not with my whole heart and soul, Stephen,' she said, with timid resolution. 'I have never consented to it with my whole mind. There are memories, and affections, and longings after perfect goodness, that have such a strong hold on me; they would never quit me for long; they would come back and be pain to me—repentance. I couldn't live in peace if I put the shadow of a wilful sin between myself and God. I

have caused sorrow already—I know—I feel it; but I have never deliberately consented to it; I have never said, "They shall suffer, that I may have joy." It has never been my will to marry you; if you were to win consent from the momentary triumph of my feeling for you, you would not have my whole soul. If I could wake back again into the time before yesterday, I would choose to be true to my calmer affections, and live without the joy of love.' . . . Again a deep flush came over Maggie's face, and she was silent. Stephen thought again that he was beginning to prevail—he had never yet believed that he should not prevail; there are possibilities which our minds shrink from too completely for us to fear them. 'Dearest,' he said, in his deepest, tenderest tone, leaning toward her, and putting his arm round her, 'you *are* mine now—the world believes it—duty must spring out of that now; in a few hours you will be legally mine, and those who had claims on us will submit—they will see that there was a force which declared against their claims.' Maggie's eyes opened wide in one terrified look at the face that was close to hers, and she started up—pale again. 'Oh, I can't do it,' she said, in a voice almost of agony; 'Stephen—don't ask me—don't urge me. I can't argue any longer—I don't know what is wise; but my heart will not let me do it. I see—I feel their trouble now; it is as if it were branded on my mind. *I* have suffered, and had no one to pity me; and now I have made others suffer. It would never leave me; it would embitter your love to me.' . . . 'Good God, Maggie!' said Stephen, rising too and grasping her arm, 'you rave. How can you go back without marrying me? You don't know what will be said, dearest. You see nothing as it really is.' 'Yes, I do. But they will believe me. I will confess everything. Lucy will believe me—she will forgive you, and—and—oh, *some* good will come

"'LEAVE ME—DON'T TORTURE ME ANY LONGER'"

by clinging to the right. Dear, dear Stephen, let me go!—don't drag me into deeper remorse. My whole soul has never consented—it does not consent now.' Stephen let go her arm, and sank back on the chair, half stunned by despairing rage. He was silent a few moments, not looking at her; while her eyes were turned toward him yearningly, in alarm at this sudden change. At last he said, still without looking at her—'Go, then—leave me—don't torture me any longer—I can't bear it.' Involuntarily she leaned toward him and put out her hand to touch his. But he shrank from it as if it had been burning iron, and said again, 'Leave me!'"

## III

It does not seem to me that the true logic of the tale is Maggie's death with Tom Tulliver, or Stephen's marriage with Lucy. It is a forced touch where the husband and wife stand together beside the grave of the brother and sister; but in the novels, the best of the novels, fifty years ago, they forced their touches rather more than they do now. To kill people or to marry them is to beg the question; but into some corner the novelist is commonly driven who deals with a problem. It is only life that can deal masterfully with problems, and life does not solve them by referring them to another life or by stifling them with happiness. How life would have solved the problem of Maggie Tulliver I am not quite prepared to say; but I have my revolt against George Eliot's solution. All the more I must own that the evolution of the heroine's character, from the sort of undisciplined, imaginative, fascinating little girl we see her at first, into the impassioned, bewildered, self-disciplined woman we see her at last, is masterly. Having given my opinion that her supreme expression

is in her relation to her lover, I have my doubts, or at least my compunctions in behalf of her relation to her brother. Unquestionably the greatest pathos of the story appeals to us from her relation to her brother. The adoring dependence, the grieving indignation, the devotion, the revolt, the submission, and the reunion which make up her love for him is such a study of sisterly affection as I should not know where to match. The very conditions of her intellectual and emotional superiority involve a moral inferiority to the brute simplicity, the narrow integrity, the heroic truth of the more singly-natured man. Maggie saw life more whole than Tom, but that part of it which he saw he discerned with a clearness denied to her large but cloudy vision. It is a great and beautiful story, which one reads with a helpless wonder that such a book should ever be in any wise superseded, or should not constantly keep the attention at least of those fitted to feel its deep and lasting significance.

## IV

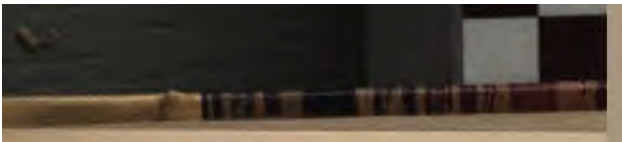
Through the immeasurably greater importance of its heroine, "The Mill on the Floss" is a greater book than "Adam Bede," if we are to take Hetty Sorrel for the heroine of "Adam Bede," as I suppose we must, and not Dinah Morris. I have no doubt but the author gave her best work to the portrayal of Dinah's nature, and not in any merely voluntary or mechanical way, but from the highest artistic perception and intention. She has revealed in her character one of the highest types of womanhood and of sainthood; and yet it is poor, shallow, weak, sinful Hetty, with the mind of a child scarcely maturing through the will if not the guilt of a murderess, that takes our interest from this great woman and saint, and holds us heart-wrung and gasping

in the presence of that squalid experience. Soul for soul, even the light man who betrays Hetty has through the anguish of his repentance really a higher claim upon our pity. But it is a law which must be divine, though we find it embodied in human justice nowhere out of fiction, that the weak and slight nature has a paramount right to our sympathy when it suffers. Its suffering moves us like that of some hapless little animal agonizing before our eyes in throes for which we can imagine no compensation elsewhere. For the soul that suffers there is the possibility of an eternity of happiness, but for the thing that has no soul, or to which we attribute none, there is no reparation; its anguish affects the spectator like an injustice, a wrong not less atrocious because indefinable. It does not matter that Hetty Sorrel is a vain, thin, hard little nature, snared through nothing better perhaps than her vulgar fancy, her ignorant and selfish ambition. All the same she is snared, she is deceived, she is blotted out of hope as effectually as if she were, in the scope of the story, blotted out of life.

The author's hold upon her nature—it can hardly be called her character—is shown in nothing more than in the artistic conscience with which she keeps her from becoming more or other than her moral potentialities imply. There are two great passages in her history, almost as far apart as its beginning and its ending, which give the whole range of her spiritual experience; and one of these will occur to the reader as the passage in which the poor creature triumphs in her beauty with her first definite hopes of Arthur Donnithorne's love. It occurs in the chapter called "The Two Bed-Chambers," where Dinah and Hetty sleep in the farm-house, and while Dinah is dedicating herself in thoughts that are cares and prayers, Hetty is peacocking up and down her little room in worship of her own pretty looks.

"Having taken off her gown and white 'kerchief, she drew a key from the large pocket that hung outside her petticoat, and, unlocking one of the lower drawers in the chest, reached from it two short bits of wax-candle —secretly bought at Treddleston—and stuck them in the two brass sockets. Then she drew forth a bundle of matches, and lighted the candles; and, last of all, a small red-framed shilling looking-glass, without blotches. It was into this small glass that she chose to look first after seating herself. She looked into it, smiling, and turning her head on one side for a minute, then laid it down and took out her brush and comb from an upper drawer. She was going to let down her hair and make herself look like that picture of a lady in Miss Lydia Donnithorne's dressing-room. It was soon done, and the dark hyacinthine curves fell on her neck. It was not heavy, massive, merely rippling hair, but soft and silken, running at every opportunity into delicate rings. But she pushed it all backward, to look like the picture, and form a dark curtain, throwing into relief her round, white neck. Then she put down her brush and comb, and looked at herself, folding her arms before her, still like the picture. . . . Oh, yes! she was very pretty; Captain Donnithorne thought so. Prettier than anybody about Hayslope—prettier than any of the ladies she had ever seen visiting at the Chase—indeed, it seemed fine ladies were rather old and ugly — and prettier than Miss Bacon, the miller's daughter, who was called the beauty of Treddleston. And Hetty looked at herself to-night with quite a different sensation from what she had ever felt before; there was an invisible spectator whose eye rested on her like morning on the flowers. His soft voice was saying over and over again those pretty things she had heard in the wood; his arm was round her, and the delicate rose-scent of his hair was with her still. The vainest woman is never thoroughly

"THE DARK HYACINTHINE CURVES FELL ON HER NECK"





conscious of her own beauty till she is loved by the man who sets her own passion vibrating in return. But Hetty seemed to have made up her mind that something was wanting, for she got up and reached an old black lace scarf out of the linen-press, and a pair of large ear-rings out of the sacred drawer from which she had taken her candles. It was an old, old scarf, full of rents, but it would make a becoming border round her shoulders, and set off the whiteness of her upper arm. And she would take out the little ear-rings she had in her ears—oh, how her aunt had scolded her for having her ears bored!—and put in those large ones; they were but colored glass and gilding; but, if you didn't know what they were made of, they looked just as well as what the ladies wore. And so she sat down again, with the large ear-rings in her ears, and the black lace scarf adjusted round her shoulders. She looked down at her arms; no arms could be prettier down to a little way below the elbow—they were white and plump, and dimpled to match her cheeks; but towards the wrist she thought with vexation that they were coarsened by butter-making and other work that ladies never did. Captain Donnithorne wouldn't like her to go on doing work; he would like to see her in nice clothes, and thin shoes and white stockings, perhaps with silk clocks to them; for he must love her very much—no one else had ever put his arm around her and kissed her in that way. He would want to marry her and make a lady of her—she could hardly dare to shape the thought—yet how else could it be? . . . And nothing could be as it had been again; perhaps some day she should be a grand lady and ride in her coach, and dress for dinner in a brocaded silk, with feathers in her hair and her dress sweeping the ground, like Miss Lydia and Lady Dacey, when she saw them going into the dining-room one evening, as she peeped through the little round

window in the lobby; only she should not be old and ugly like Miss Lydia, or all the same thickness like Lady Dacey, but very pretty, with her hair done in a great many different ways, and sometimes in a pink dress, and sometimes in a white one—she didn't know which she liked best; and Mary Burge and everybody would perhaps see her going out in her carriage—or rather, they would *hear* of it; it was impossible to imagine these things happening at Hayslope in sight of her aunt. At the thought of all this splendor, Hetty got up from her chair, and in doing so caught the little red-framed glass with the edge of her scarf, so that it fell with a bang on the floor; but she was too eagerly occupied with her vision to care about picking it up, and, after a momentary start, began to pace with a pigeon-like stateliness backward and forward along her room, in her colored stays and colored skirt, and the old black lace scarf round her shoulders, and the great glass ear-rings in her ears. . . . No eyelashes could be more beautiful than Hetty's; and now, while she walks with her pigeon-like stateliness along the room, and looks down on her shoulders bordered by the old black lace, the dark fringe shows to perfection on her pink cheek. They are but dim, ill-defined pictures that her narrow bit of an imagination can make of the future; but of every picture she is the central figure, in fine clothes. Captain Donnithorne is very close to her, putting his arm round her, perhaps kissing her, and everybody else is admiring and envying her, especially Mary Burge, whose new print dress looks very contemptible by the side of Hetty's resplendent toilet. Does any sweet or sad memory mingle with this dream of the future—any loving thought of her second parents—of the children she had helped to tend—of any youthful companion, any pet animal, any relic of her own childhood even? Not one. There are

some plants that have hardly any roots; you may tear them from their native nook of rock or wall, and just lay them over your ornamental flower-pot, and they blossom none the worse."

## V

The whole dark, fateful drama, the drama predestined of the contact of such natures as Hetty Sorrel's and Arthur Donnithorne's, passes between this typical scene and the other of which I wish to remind the reader. That has happened which must happen with a spirit so selfish and shallow as hers, and a spirit so selfish and soft as his; and though his guilt is greater because his knowledge is greater, she is guilty to the limit of her lesser knowledge. When the man who loves her with the love of the husband he had hoped to be compels her paramour to break with her, but too late, and when Hetty can no longer hide her shame, she seeks to hide herself from all who know her. She runs away from home, and when her time comes, and her child is born, she is tempted to kill it. It is found dead, though she has not killed it, and its death is traced to her, and she is condemned to die for the deed she has thought to do but has not done. The night before she is appointed to suffer she is in her cell, with Dinah Morris watching and praying beside her.

"'Dinah,' Hetty sobbed out, throwing her arms round Dinah's neck, 'I will speak . . . I will tell . . . I won't hide it any more.' But the tears and sobs were too violent. Dinah raised her gently from her knees, and seated her on the pallet again, sitting down by her side. It was a long time before the convulsed throat was quiet, and even then they sat some time in stillness and darkness, holding each other's hands. At last Hetty whis-

pered, 'I didn't do it, Dinah. . . . I buried it in the wood, . . . and it cried. . . . I heard it cry, . . . ever such a way off, . . . all night, . . . and I went back because it cried.' . . . She paused, and then spoke hurriedly in a louder, pleading tone. 'But I thought perhaps it wouldn't die—there might somebody find it. I didn't kill it—I didn't kill it myself. I put it down there and covered it up, and when I came back it was gone. . . . It was because I was so very miserable, Dinah. . . . I didn't know where to go, . . . and I tried to kill myself before, and I couldn't. Oh, I tried so to drown myself in the pool, and I couldn't. I went to Windsor —I ran away—did you know? I went to find him, as he might take care of me; and he was gone; and then I didn't know what to do. I dared not go back home again—I couldn't bear it. I couldn't have borne to look at anybody, for they'd have scorned me. I thought o' you sometimes, and thought I'd come to you, for I didn't think you'd be cross with me, and cry shame on me; I thought I could tell you. . . . And I came to a haystack, where I thought I could lie down and keep myself warm all night. There was a place cut into it, where I could make me a bed; and I lay comfortable, and the baby was warm against me; and I must have gone to sleep for a good while, for when I woke it was morning, but not very light, and the baby was crying. And I saw a wood a little way off. . . . I thought there'd perhaps be a ditch or a pond there, . . . and it was so early I thought I could hide the child there, and get a long way off before the folks was up. And then I thought I'd go home— I'd get rides in carts and go home, and tell 'em I'd been to try and see for a place, and couldn't get one. I longed so for it, Dinah—I longed so to be safe at home. I don't know how I felt about the baby. I

seemed to hate it—it was like a heavy weight hanging round my neck; and yet its crying went through me, and I dared not look at its little hands and face. But I went on to the wood, and I walked about, but there was no water.' . . . Hetty shuddered. She was silent for some moments, and when she began again it was in a whisper. 'I came to a place where there were lots of chips and turf, and I sat down on the trunk of a tree to think what I should do. And all of a sudden I saw a hole under the nut-tree, like a little grave. And it darted into me like lightning—I'd lay the baby there, and cover it with the grass and the chips. I couldn't kill it any other way. And I'd done it in a minute; and, oh, it cried so, Dinah—I *couldn't* cover it quite up—I thought, perhaps, somebody 'ud come and take care of it, and then it wouldn't die. And I made haste out of the wood, but I could hear it crying all the while; and when I got out into the fields, it was as if I was held fast—I couldn't go away, for all I wanted so to go. . . . But it was morning, for it kept getting lighter; and I turned back the way I'd come. I couldn't help it, Dinah; it was the baby's crying made me go; and yet I was frightened to death. . . . I saw nothing but that place in the wood where I'd buried the baby. . . . I see it now. Oh, Dinah! shall I always see it?'

"Hetty hung round Dinah, and shuddered again. The silence seemed long before she went on.

"'I met nobody, for it was very early, and I got into the wood. . . . I knew the way to the place, . . . the place against the nut-tree; and I could hear it crying at every step. . . . I thought it was alive. . . . I don't know whether I was frightened or glad. . . . I don't know what I felt. I only know I was in the wood and heard the cry. I don't know what I felt till I saw the baby was gone. And when

I'd put it there, I thought I should like somebody to find it, and save it from dying; but when I saw it was gone, I was struck like a stone with fear. I never thought o' stirring, I felt so weak. I knew I couldn't run away, and everybody as saw me 'ud know about the baby. My heart went like a stone; I couldn't wish or try for anything; it seemed like as if I should stay there forever, and nothing 'ud ever change. But they came and took me away.' Hetty was silent, but she shuddered again, as if there were still something behind; and Dinah waited, for her heart was so full that tears must come before words. At last Hetty burst out, with a sob, 'Dinah, do you think God will take away that crying and the place in the wood, now I've told everything?' 'Let us pray, poor sinner; let us fall on our knees again, and pray to the God of all mercy.'"

## VI

It is a mark of maturing power in an author to deal more with complex and less with simple character. Acquaintance with life brings an increasing sense of the prevalence of mixed motives in the actions of men, and a keener perception of the fact that personality resides rather in the motives than the actions of men. An action is black or white; a motive is commonly the blend of several if not all the colors. This law of life the ripening talent gladly makes the law of its art. But there is another law, rather of the author's nature than his art, to which his allegiance is involuntary and insensible, and this is the law of recurrence in the types he treats.

"Adam Bede" was George Eliot's first great novel, and its characters, imposing and important as they were, were almost primitively simple. Then came "The

Mill on the Floss," where the characters are mainly simple, but where we have in Maggie Tulliver a personality worthy in its complexity of the maturing power of the author. In "Romola," a later book, there is a reversion in the heroine to the singly-motived types of the earlier books; and in "Middlemarch," which came still later, the characters are so subtly studied that, with the exception of Rosamond Vincy's plain selfishness, the motives of nearly all, good, bad, and indifferent, are found as mixed as they would be in life. In "Daniel Deronda" we see not a recurrence to the original simplicity in the motives of the persons represented, but rather the matured power of showing them complex beginning to fall into decay, to weaken and to fail of the supreme effects achieved in "Middlemarch."

It may almost be said that in "Romola" George Eliot, as an artist, came to what Tolstoy, in the moral world, calls "the first consciousness." In Tito Melema she must have rejoiced with full knowledge as the prime figure in English fiction, since Shakspere's men, to illustrate the play of mixed motives in character. That consummate scoundrel is indeed a glorious achievement; but Romola, generously as she is imagined, is comparatively a failure. She is not an Italian of the Renaissance, she is not an Italian at all; she is a deeply ethicized intellectual English woman of the nineteenth century, with a Protestant conscience and a middle-class tradition, moved by Puritanic principles, which even if we suppose her a Florentine Piagnone and a follower of Savonarola, would not have actuated a Bardi in the time of the declining republic. She is spiritually a reversion to Dinah Morris, though appointed to such different offices in the story; as Tessa, her husband's ignorant little paramour, is a reversion to Hetty Sorrel. Tessa, of course, has nothing of Hetty's ignorant ambition, and there is no tragedy of self-deceit in her case;

she has given herself to Tito because she has been asked, and not because she has ever dreamt of marrying him; she is as soft as Hetty is hard, and she is not vain. She is a contadina, as Hetty is a country girl, and Tito in her dim world holds the same high place that Donnithorne holds in Hetty's; but her fate is not so terrible, because in that old Italy, still pagan under the Christian forms, there is no such tragedy for her as for Hetty in a time and a place where the Christian ideal of womanhood had made the fear of shame stronger than even the fear of crime.

## GEORGE ELIOT'S ROSAMOND VINCY AND DOROTHEA BROOKE

THE cultivated world was long ago brought to profess its open pleasure in character because it is true rather than in character because it is pleasing or edifying; but whether this pleasure is real or not, or whether it is not underlain by a secret preference for a character because he is good or she is pretty, I am not quite sure. In the theatres frequented by the simple-hearted sort of people, the actor playing the part of a virtuous person is applauded, and the actor playing the part of a villain is hissed, irrespective of their artistic merits; but this rarely happens in any two-dollar house. Still, I am not satisfied that it would not happen if the two-dollar audience were as sincere as the fifty-cent audience, and I have my misgivings in offering to the admiration of the reader a detestable character merely because it is a masterpiece.

### I

I am certain that it would be difficult to find a more detestable character, or a truer, than Rosamond Vincy, who equally with Dorothea Brooke is the heroine of "Middlemarch." She is a very beautiful girl, and Lydgate who marries her loves her with a tenderness worthy the soul that is not in her. The soul that is in her is small and meanly selfish, but neither she nor he knows how small or meanly selfish at first. Rosamond, indeed, has a very high ideal of herself, which eventuates

in an inexorable conceit after marriage, when the early tumult of the emotions subsides, and she has time to take full thought of her merits in contrast to her husband's demerits. She is of that intensely personal nature which receives whatever happens as of direct intention toward itself; and feels injured or favored by the course of human events as if they were primarily concerned with it. As the course of events is not agreeable to Rosamond after her marriage with Lydgate, she naturally holds him responsible for them, and he falls in her esteem and her affection when he finds that they have been living extravagantly and wishes her to help him retrench. She never could have duly appreciated either his brilliant mind or his tender heart, and she sets herself to thwart and baffle him with a success which the greatness of both his mind and heart render easy for a dull, narrow, pretty egotist.

There can be nothing more tragical than the story of their unhappy married life, in which she harasses him with her paltry ambitions and resentments, and wears him out at last. Such women literally kill men, and the more generous the men the more easily they fall the prey of such women. It is nothing to Rosamond and can be nothing that her husband is recognized as a man of great scientific importance, and has the making of the highest professional fame in him. There is no sort of opinion, public or private, which could convince her that he had not wronged her by falling into money difficulties after he married her, or in failing to make her life as luxurious for her as she had expected. She breaks his heart and then she breaks his spirit, and when he dies she inherits the money that at last comes to her from his life-insurance with a sense of desert which has never once forsaken her.

We all know women like Rosamond Vincy; the type is eternal and ineffaceable, but a woman of her sort will

complacently sit before Rosamond's portrait, and never dream that there is anything like herself in it. The successive scenes in which her unconscious, abominable selfishness is developed can scarcely be said to culminate, but they each deepen and widen a little the sense of her deadly and deadening egotism, and of the hopelessness with which a generous spirit like Lydgate's must struggle in the clinging and stifling hold of a polyp-nature like hers. In a novel of later date, where the dramatic method is more used, the whole situation would be imparted at once; but it must be seen that the partial suggestions of George Eliot follow one upon another with a deepening impression, till the reader's pity for Lydgate's doom in the wretched creature he loves would have excused his surrender to almost any temptation. Lydgate suffers a certain moral decay in his endeavor to please his wife, and even falls under suspicion of complicity with another's crime; but at the worst he has done no wrong beyond lowering his aspirations, and has only sinned against himself.

Any one of the passages in which the author securely if slowly feels her way to the eventuality would serve to exhibit Rosamond as she always is, and I cannot say that I choose the first scene in which Lydgate tries to make her understand the situation as stronger than the others.

"'Dear Rosy, lay down your work and come to sit by me,' he said, gently, pushing away the table, and stretching out his arm to draw a chair near his own. Rosamond obeyed. As she came toward him in her drapery of transparent, faintly tinted muslin, her slim yet round figure never looked more graceful; as she sat down by him and laid one hand on the elbow of his chair, at last looking at him and meeting his eyes, her delicate neck and cheek and purely cut lips never had more of that untarnished beauty which touches us in

spring-time and infancy and all sweet freshness. It touched Lydgate now, and mingled the early memories of his love for her with all the other memories which were stirred in this crisis of deep trouble. He laid his ample hand softly on hers, saying: 'Dear!' with the lingering utterance which affection gives to the word. Rosamond, too, was still under the power of that same past, and her husband was still in part the Lydgate whose approval had stirred delight. She put his hair lightly away from his forehead, then laid her other hand on his, and was conscious of forgiving him. 'I am obliged to tell you what will hurt you, Rosy. But there are things which husband and wife must think of together. I dare say it has occurred to you already that I am short of money.' Lydgate paused; but Rosamond turned her neck and looked at a vase on the mantel-piece. 'I was not able to pay for all the things we had to get before we were married, and there have been expenses since which I have been obliged to meet. I took pains to keep it from you while you were not well; now we must think about it together, and you must help me.' 'What can *I* do, Tertius?' said Rosamond, turning her eyes on him again. That little speech of four words, like so many others in all languages, is capable by varied vocal inflections of expressing all states of mind from helpless dimness to exhaustive argumentative perception, from the completest, self-devoting fellowship to the most neutral aloofness. Rosamond's thin utterance threw into the words 'What can *I* do?' as much neutrality as they could hold. They fell like a mortal chill on Lydgate's roused tenderness. He did not storm in indignation—he felt too sad a sinking of the heart. And when he spoke again it was more in the tone of a man who forces himself to fulfil a task. 'It is necessary for you to know, because I have to give security for a time, and a man must come to make an inventory

"'THIS IS ALL THE JEWELRY YOU EVER GAVE ME'"

of the furniture.' Rosamond colored deeply. 'Have you not asked papa for money?' she said, as soon as she could speak. . . . 'No, Rosy,' said Lydgate, decisively. 'It is too late to do that. . . . I insist upon it that your father shall not know, unless I choose to tell him,' added Lydgate, with a more peremptory emphasis. This certainly was unkind, but Rosamond had thrown him back on evil expectation as to what she would do in the way of quiet, steady disobedience. The unkindness seemed unpardonable to her: she was not given to weeping, and disliked it, but now her chin and lips began to tremble and the tears welled up. . . . He could not speak again immediately; but Rosamond did not go on sobbing; she tried to conquer her agitation and wiped away her tears, continuing to look before her at the mantel-piece. . . . 'Your friends would not wish you to be without money. And surely these odious tradesmen might be made to understand that and to wait, if you would make proper representations to them.' 'This is idle, Rosamond,' said Lydgate, angrily. 'You must learn to take my judgment on questions you don't understand. I have made necessary arrangements, and they must be carried out.' . . . Rosamond quietly went out of the room, leaving Lydgate helpless and wondering. Was she not coming back? It seemed that she had no more identified herself with him than if they had been creatures of different species and opposing interests. . . . 'This is all the jewelry you ever gave me. You can return what you like of it, and of the plate also. You will not, of course, expect me to stay at home to-morrow. I shall go to papa's.' To many women the look Lydgate cast at her would have been more terrible than one of anger: it had in it a despairing acceptance of the distance she was placing between them. . . . 'I shall not touch these jewels,

Rosy. Take them away again. But I will write out a list of plate that we may return, and that can be packed up and sent at once.' . . . Rosamond went to reach the inkstand, and after setting it on the table was going to turn away, when Lydgate, who was standing close by, put his arm around her and drew her toward him, saying: 'Come, darling, let us make the best of things. It will only be for a time, I hope, that we shall have to be stingy and particular. Kiss me.' His native warm-heartedness took a great deal of quenching, and it is a part of manliness for a husband to feel keenly the fact that an inexperienced girl has got into trouble by marrying him. She received his kiss and returned it faintly, and in this way an appearance of accord was recovered for the time."

## II

It may be said that we know Rosamond Vincy from the beginning, and that her character does not reveal itself more fully in the different scenes that follow this. But so do we know the character of Hamlet from the beginning, and it is new light rather than more light that events throw upon it, as the drama proceeds. There is no surprise, but a very great interest and instruction, in Rosamond's meddling conceit when she interferes with Lydgate's brave endeavors to get out of debt, and brings shame upon him by her secret appeals to his family; and in the absolute immorality of her willingness to have him so bound by a money favor to Bulstrode that he is helpless to declare his suspicions of Bulstrode's guilt in an affair very like murder. When the shadow of this affair falls upon Lydgate, too, Rosamond feels herself chiefly aggrieved, and blames her husband for her suffering through him. It is by no means out of

keeping with what else we know of her that she should have meantime supposed herself to be loved by Lydgate's friend Ladislaw, and that she should have suffered his passion, without returning it, as a just tribute to her meritorious beauty.

There is of course the question, which I hope will occur to the reader of these papers, whether in portraying a nature so altogether odious as Rosamond's the author has not been guilty of leze-complexity. Is not such a character too simply, too singly detestable, to be a true copy? I confess that it comes perilously near incurring some such censure; but perhaps the defence may be that we have not taken due account of mitigating circumstances in Rosamond's case. If Lydgate had smoothly and splendidly succeeded, as she expected, from the beginning, and there had been no hint of debts or troubles, her conceit would have concerned itself with little, insignificant things; she would have been content chiefly to talk incessantly about herself, and safely flirt well within a devoted admiration of her husband; she would have been a pretty bore, without the power of considerable mischief, as she was certainly always without the wish for it, or the cognizance of it. There is fairly enough the implication of all this in the representation of her character, as we must own when we most suspect the author of having come to hate Rosamond so much that she is just to her with difficulty.

Novelists ought not to have their favorites among their creations, as parents ought not to have their favorites among their children; but no doubt they have them. If the novelists are women, they wish their readers to share their preferences, and it might be true to say the same thing of the novelists even if they are men. At any rate, George Eliot has her preferences most distinctly, and she pursues some of her women with a rancor as perceptible as her fondness for others. I will not deny

that I think this a defect of her art; it is so; and I am not going to defend it any more in the case of Dorothea Brooke, whom she loves, than in the case of Rosamond Vincy, whom she hates with a hatred passing her hatred of Hetty Sorrel and Gwendolen Harleth, and all the other anti-heroines of her books. She succeeds in commending these to our dislike rather than she succeeds in commending to our liking her Romolas and Mary Garths and Mirahs, perhaps because in fiction as in life a woman does not know how to praise her friends sparingly enough. But in Dorothea Brooke she has known how to hold her hand, or rather has she known how so to temper Dorothea's strength with weakness, her wisdom with folly, her good with evil, as to render her entirely credible and entirely lovable.

## III

Since I wrote the foregoing paragraph I have been reviewing the whole career, or rather the whole character, of Dorothea in "Middlemarch," and I think I can now go still farther in praise of her, and keep well within the limits of reason. She is of a most noble make, not merely because she is of a high mind and an eager conscience, but because she has a will to be generously of use to those who need her, and because she is above all pettiness in the cruel disappointment which life brings when it teaches her that sometimes those who need her help most cannot receive it ungrudgingly, or even at all. She once says it herself in talk with Will Ladislaw, "'I have a belief of my own, and it comforts me.' 'What is that?' said Will, rather jealous of the belief. 'That by desiring what is perfectly good, even when we don't quite know what it is and cannot do what we would, we are part of the divine power against evil—

widening the skirt of light and making the struggle with darkness narrower. . . . Please not to call it by any name,' said Dorothea, putting out her hands entreatingly. 'You will say it is Persian, or something else geographical. It is my life. I have found it out, and cannot part with it.'"

Dorothea is here spiritually outlined almost as strongly as she is physically intimated in this fine bit of portraiture.

"Miss Brooke had that kind of beauty which seems to be thrown into relief by poor dress. Her hand and wrist were so finely formed that she could wear sleeves not less bare of style than those in which the Blessed Virgin appeared to Italian painters; and her profile as well as her stature and bearing seemed to gain the more dignity from her plain garments, which by the side of provincial fashion gave her the impressiveness of a fine quotation from the Bible,—or from one of our elder poets,—in a paragraph of to-day's newspaper."

But it would be doing wrong to the human part which is so great a part of Dorothea (as it is with all George Eliot's real heroines) not to let her be seen in yet another phase, where her beauty is contrasted with the different beauty of Rosamond Vincy, and the very difference of their souls is suggested in the difference of their styles.

"Let those who know tell us exactly what stuff it was that Dorothea wore in those days of mild autumn—that thin, white woollen stuff, soft to the touch and soft to the eye. It always seemed to have been lately washed, and to smell of the sweet hedges—was always in the shape of a pelisse with sleeves hanging all out of the fashion. The grace and dignity were in her limbs and neck; and about her simply parted hair and candid eyes the large round poke which was then in the fate of women, seemed no more odd as a head-dress than the gold trencher we call a halo. . . . Dorothea put

out her hand with her usual simple kindness, and looked admiringly at Lydgate's lovely bride. . . . They were both tall, and their eyes were on a level; but imagine Rosamond's infantile blondness and wondrous crown of hair-plaits, with her pale-blue dress of a fit and fashion so perfect that no dressmaker could look at it without emotion; her small hands duly set off with rings, and that controlled self-consciousness of manner which is the expensive substitute for simplicity."

Outlines, I have called these sketches of Dorothea, and perhaps she is never more than outlined. The inferior nature can be fully shown, because it is of a material which can be palpably handled without loss or hurt; but in the superior nature there is something elusive, something sensitive that escapes or perishes under the touch, and leaves the exhaustive study a dumb image and not a speaking likeness. Rosamond Vincy can be decanted to the dregs, and be only more and more Rosamond; but if you pour out all Dorothea her essence flies from you in a vital aroma. She seems hardly to be contained in the story of her life, but to exist mainly somewhere outside of it. That story is indeed very slight, and without the incidents that lend themselves to remembrance as powerful dramatic moments, though it is of such a fatal pathos. It is reportably that of a magnanimous young girl who falls in love with the notion of being the helpmeet of an eminent scholar because she believes in the importance of his work to the world, and in her own fitness to be of use to him in it, and so marries a dull, passionless pedant of mean soul and mistaken mind, who forces her out of his life from first to last because there is no room in it for any but his paltry self. The tragedy of Edward Casaubon is that he has undertaken work inconceivably beyond his powers, and that to a real scholarship

his devoted labors are worse than useless: but his wife's tragedy is that he himself is a greater error, a sadder solecism, than even these. He cannot see her divine good-will any more than he can feel value in the facts with which his learning deals; it is the law of his narrow being that he must forbid almost her sympathy, restrict her help to the merest mechanical effect, and scarcely suffer her the efficiency of a trained nurse, when his health fails. It is to be said in his defence that he cannot admit her to his inner life because he has none, and if on that mere outside which is his whole being, he is cold and jealous and repellent, that he was made so and cannot help it. But Dorothea's fate is not the less cruel because it is his fate, too; and she is all the greater because she rises above it, not constantly, but finally.

In her case, as in the case of Lydgate, we see a meaner nature making a noble nature its prey, but Dorothea is more enduringly built than Lydgate, or else she is more favored by chance. Perhaps it is scientifically accurate to say this rather than the other thing, for Rosamond outlives Lydgate instead of dying and releasing him to new chances, while Casaubon suddenly, in the most critical moment, dies of heart failure and leaves Dorothea free. He has been on the point of enslaving her forever, of holding her by mortmain from that happiness to which his death must liberate her; for her morbid conscience has sided with him in his jealousy of the man whom she is unconsciously tending to love; and when he has put the cruelest pressure upon her to make her promise to be ruled by his wish after his death, she comes out after a sleepless night to consent.

"When Dorothea was out on the gravel walks, she lingered among the nearer clumps of trees, hesitating, as she had done once before, though from a different cause. Then she had feared lest her effort at fellowship

should be unwelcome; now she dreaded going to the spot where she foresaw that she must bind herself to a fellowship from which she shrank. Neither law nor the world's opinion compelled her to this—only her husband's nature and her own compassion, only the ideal and not the real yoke of marriage. . . . When she entered the Yew-tree walk she could not see her husband; but the walk had bends, and she went, expecting to catch sight of his figure wrapped in a blue cloak, which, with a warm velvet cap, was his outer garment on chill days for the garden. It occurred to her that he might be resting in the summer-house, toward which the path diverged a little. Turning the angle, she could see him seated on the bench, and his brow was bowed down on them, the blue cloak being dragged forward and screening the face on each side. 'He exhausted himself last night,' Dorothea said to herself, thinking at first that he was asleep, and that the summer-house was too damp a place to rest in. . . . She went into the summer-house and said, 'I am come, Edward; I am ready.' He took no notice, and she thought that he must be fast asleep. She laid her hand on his shoulder, and repeated, 'I am ready!' Still he was motionless, and with a sudden, confused fear, she leaned down to him, close to his head, crying, in a distressed tone: 'Wake, dear, wake! Listen to me. I am come to answer.' But Dorothea never gave her answer."

This end, with whatever skill it is managed, must be confessed a mechanical means of extricating Dorothea from her difficulty. It is to be condemned for that, and it is to be regretted that George Eliot had not had the higher courage of her art, and the clearer vision of her morality, and shown Dorothea capable of breaking a promise extorted from her against her reason and against her heart. It was

"'WAKE, DEAR, WAKE! LISTEN TO ME'"

from Ladislaw and her chance of happiness with him that her husband would have withheld her, and she could not have been more recreant to his will in being recreant to her word.

Her marriage to Ladislaw at last is one of the finest things, and one of the truest things in a book so great that it almost persuades one to call it the greatest in English fiction. It is not because "Middlemarch" is an immense canvas, thronged with such a multitude of marvellously distinguished and differenced figures, that it so richly represents life. Other huge novels have been of as great scope and greater dramatic effect; but "Middlemarch" alone seems to me akin in spiritual power to "War and Peace." It is in its truth to motives as well as results that it is so tremendously convincing. After a lapse of years one comes to it not with a sense of having overmeasured it before, but with the perception that one had not at first realized its grandeur. It is as large as life in those moral dimensions which deepen inwardly and give the real compass of any artistic achievement through the impression received. There are none of its incidents that I find were overestimated in my earlier knowledge of them; and there are some that are far greater than I had remembered. I have had especially to correct my former judgment—I am not sure that it was mine at first hand—of the character of Ladislaw and his fitness to be Dorothea's lover. I had thought him a slight, if not a light man, a poorish sort of Bohemian, existing by her preference, in the reader's tolerance, and perhaps, as her husband, half a mistake. But in this renewed acquaintance with him, I must own him a person of weight by those measures which test the value of precious stones or precious metals: an artist through and through, a man of high courage and high honor, and of a certain social detachment which leaves him free to see the more easily and honestly

Dorothea made great and sorrowful mistakes through her generous and loyal nature; but Ladislaw was one of her inspirations: a centre of truth in which her love and her duty, otherwise so sadly at odds, could meet and be at peace.

## GEORGE ELIOT'S GWENDOLEN HARLETH AND JANET DEMPSTER

THERE was such strength and such promise of strenuous continuance in the work which made Marian Evans's pseudonym known that her public could await each of her successive novels in reliance upon some fresh evidence of her power. This could scarcely be shown in greater measure than at first, and there are people of sound judgment who consider her "Scenes of Clerical Life" still her best fiction, though it was followed by "Silas Marner," and "Adam Bede," and "The Mill on the Floss," and "Romola" and "Middlemarch," and "Daniel Deronda." The last stands at the other end of the great line, and until we reach "Theophrastus Such," there is scarcely, after the first, a sign of failing skill in the cunning hand. It has seemed to me therefore the more interesting, in this concluding study of George Eliot's heroines, to deal with types drawn from the extremes parted by so many and such splendid performances.

### I

Few students of "Daniel Deronda," if they were readers of the novel when it began to appear, will have forgotten the characteristic terms which form Gwendolen Harleth's introduction. "Was she beautiful or not beautiful? and what was the secret of form or expression which gave the dynamic quality to her glance? Was the good or the evil genius dominant in those beams?

Probably the evil; else why was the effect that of unrest rather than of undisturbed charm? Why was the wish to look again felt as coercion and not as a longing in which the whole being consents?"

She who raised these questions in Daniel Deronda's mind was occupied in gambling in one of those splendid Continental resorts now mostly closed to their rich and noble patrons; and the talk about her goes on—rather too much for the reader's ear—among the spectators. "The Nereid in sea-green robes and silver ornaments, with a pale sea-green feather fastened in silver falling backward over her green hat and light brown hair, was Gwendolen Harleth. She was under the wing, or rather soared by the shoulder, of the lady who had sat by her at the roulette-table. . . . 'A striking girl—that Miss Harleth—unlike others.' 'Yes, she has got herself up a sort of serpent now—all green and silver, and winds her neck about a little more than usual.' 'Oh, she must always be doing something extraordinary. She is that kind of girl, I fancy.' . . . 'You like a *nez retroussé*, then, and long, narrow eyes?' 'When they go with such an *ensemble*.' 'The *ensemble du serpent?*' 'She is certainly very graceful; but she wants a tinge of color in her cheeks. It is a sort of Lamia beauty she has.' 'On the contrary, I think her complexion one of her charms. It is a warm paleness; it looks thoroughly healthy. And that delicate nose with its gradual little upward curve is distracting. And then her mouth—there never was a prettier mouth, the lips curled backward so finely, eh?' 'Think so? I cannot endure that sort of mouth. It looks so self-complacent, as if it knew its own beauty—the curves are too immovable. I like a mouth that trembles more.'"

It appears, of course, that the girl is gambling, this once, for the distraction of the experience, that she is of good family in good society, and that she is chaperoned

"THE NEREID IN SEA-GREEN ROBES . . . WAS GWENDOLEN HARLETH"

at the roulette-table by her elderly cousin, who is a baroness. The impression that she is wilful, conscious, selfish, and spoiled is not corrected by anything in her very ugly history as it ensues, though there is throughout the suggestion of potentialities for good in her nature, eventuating at last in a magnanimous penitence, of which we have at once some hint in the interest which Deronda's quality inspires in her. A young girl in the first pages of a novel does not betray for nothing the curiosity Gwendolen confesses; it is obvious to the meanest intelligence that she is going to be in love with him; and her passion though unrequited, and not very well justified to the reader by anything shown in the elaborated personality of that fine young Jew, proves the saving factor in her life. It does not keep her from the great error and wickedness of marrying so brutally bad a man as Grandcourt out of sordid ambition and lust of the things that money can buy; but those who like to condone the faults of pretty women will find some excuse for Gwendolen Harleth in her failure to win the love of Deronda. It may be also urged in her behalf that she is poor as well as proud and pretty, and that she is tempted and flattered out of her better self by the sense of inherent power; I hope there are none who go so far as to find merit in her letting her abominable husband come so near drowning before her eyes that when she has made up her mind to save him it is too late.

Even the reader who is not acquainted with Gwendolen Harleth at first hands will perceive from these intimations that she is a person of very mixed qualities, very daringly composed. The ordinary observer who discovers that a woman is a *poseuse* is apt rashly to decide that she is also a fool, but this by no means follows. She is often a person of a great deal of sense, and perhaps principle, and she may behave wisely up to that

point where the brain requires the help of the heart in achieving final wisdom. She may even have a heart, and experience its compunctions at all times except in the deliriums of triumphant will or of gratified vanity. Flirts are by no means wholly wicked, or the world, which is pretty full of them, would be a much worse world than it is; flirts even of the deadly quality of Gwendolen Harleth are tempered to mercy by their womanly weaknesses, and are very rarely quite demoniacal. The histrionic strain in her nature, which makes her a *poseuse* would, if it had gone a little deeper, have made her an artist, and depersonalized its effects. It is in fact very pitiful when, while hesitating to accept Grandcourt, she turns her thoughts to art with the modest ambition of excelling in opera, for in society she has been admired both for her acting and singing. She determines not to take this step without due authorization, and she asks the advice of Klesmer the musician. That conscientious artist is kindly merciless concerning her gifts, and he leaves her to a mortification and despair after which there is nothing for her worldliness but a loveless marriage with a man of whom she knows nothing but evil. One very black chapter of his past is revealed to her by a woman whom he has wronged and who comes to plead with her not to marry him, bringing Grandcourt's children with her in proof that he should be her husband and not Gwendolen's. She promises, and she breaks her promise. She marries Grandcourt, and he takes her home to the splendor and luxury for which she marries him.

"She fell silent in spite of herself as they approached the gates, and when her husband said, 'Here we are at home!' and for the first time kissed her on the lips, she hardly knew of it: it was no more than the passive acceptance of a greeting in the midst of an absorbing show.

. . . But there was a brilliant light in the hall—warmth, matting, carpets, full-length portraits, Olympian statues, assiduous servants. . . . Gwendolen felt herself being led by Grandcourt along a subtly scented corridor, into an anteroom where she saw an open doorway sending out a rich glow of light and color. 'These are our dens,' said Grandcourt. 'You will like to be quiet here till dinner. We shall dine early.' He pressed her hand to his lips and moved away, more in love than he had ever expected to be. Gwendolen yielded up her hat and mantle, threw herself into a chair by the glowing hearth, and saw herself repeated in glass panels with all her faint-green satin surroundings. The housekeeper had passed into this boudoir from the adjoining dressing-room and seemed disposed to linger. . . . 'Here is a packet, madam, which I was ordered to give into nobody's hands but yours, when you were alone. The person who brought it said it was a present particularly ordered by Mr. Grandcourt; but he was not to know of its arrival till he saw you wear it. Excuse me, madam; I felt it right to obey orders.' Gwendolen took the packet and let it lie on her lap till she heard the doors close. It came into her mind that the packet might contain the diamonds which Grandcourt had spoken of as being deposited somewhere and to be given to her on her marriage. In this moment of confused feeling and creeping luxurious languor she was glad of this diversion—and glad of such an event as having her own diamonds to try on. Within all the sealed paper coverings was a box, but within the box there *was* a jewel-case; and now she felt no doubt that she had the diamonds. But on opening the case, in the same instant that she saw them gleam she saw a letter lying above them. It was as if an adder had lain on them. Her heart gave a leap which seemed to have spent all her

strength; and as she opened the bit of thin paper, it shook with the trembling of her hands. But it was legible as print, and thrust its words upon her. 'These diamonds, which were once given with ardent love to Lydia Glasher, she passes on to you. You have broken your word to her, that you might possess what was hers. Perhaps you think of being happy, as she once was, and of having beautiful children such as hers, who will thrust hers aside. God is too just for that. The man you have married has a withered heart. His best young love was mine; you could not take that from me when you took the rest. . . . He would have married me at last, if you had not broken your word. You will have your punishment. I desire it with all my soul. . . . You took him with your eyes open. The willing wrong you have done me will be your curse.' It seemed at first as if Gwendolen's eyes were spellbound in reading the horrible words of the letter over and over again as a doom of penance; but suddenly a new spasm of terror made her lean forward and stretch out the paper toward the fire, lest accusation and proof at once should meet all eyes. It flew like a feather from her trembling fingers and was caught up in a great draught of flame. In her movement the casket fell to the floor and the diamonds rolled out. She took no notice, but fell back in her chair again helpless. She could not see the reflections of herself then; they were like so many women petrified white; but coming near herself you might have seen the tremor in her lips and hands. . . . After that long while, there was a tap at the door and Grandcourt entered, dressed for dinner. The sight of him brought a new nervous shock, and Gwendolen screamed again and again with hysterical violence. He had expected to see her dressed and smiling, ready to be led down. He saw her pallid, shrieking as it seemed with terror, the jewels scattered around her on the floor."

In Grandcourt the imperious girl who had dreamed of ruling him finds a master whose will can break her own or bend it to his when he chooses, and their marriage is a long atrocity which begins almost from this awful moment.

"One evening, shortly before they came to the Abbey, they were going to dine at Brackenshaw Castle. Gwendolen had said to herself that she would never wear those diamonds: they had horrible words clinging and crawling about them, as from some bad dream, whose images lingered on the perturbed sense. She came down dressed in her white, with only a streak of gold and a pendant of emeralds, which Grandcourt had given her, round her neck, and the little emerald stars in her ears. Grandcourt stood with his back to the fire and looked at her as she entered. 'Am I altogether as you like?' she said, speaking rather gayly. She was not without enjoyment in this occasion of going to Brackenshaw Castle with her new dignities upon her, as men whose affairs are sadly involved will enjoy dining out among persons likely to be under a pleasant mistake about them. 'No,' said Grandcourt. Gwendolen felt suddenly uncomfortable, wondering what was to come. . . . 'Oh, mercy!' she exclaimed, the pause lasting till she could bear it no longer. 'How am I to alter myself?' 'Put on the diamonds,' said Grandcourt, looking straight at her with his narrow glance. Gwendolen paused in her turn, afraid of showing any emotion, and feeling that nevertheless there was some change in her eyes as they met his. But she was obliged to answer, and said as indifferently as she could, 'Oh, please not. I don't think diamonds suit me.' 'What you think has nothing to do with it,' said Grandcourt, his *sotto voce* imperiousness seeming to have an evening quietude and finish, like his toilet. 'I wish you to wear the diamonds.' 'Pray excuse me; I like these emeralds,' said Gwendo-

len, frightened in spite of her preparation. That white hand of his which was touching his whisker was capable, she fancied, of clinging round her neck and threatening to throttle her; for her fear of him, mingled with the vague foreboding of some retributive calamity which hung about her life, had reached a superstitious point. 'Oblige me by telling me your reason for not wearing the diamonds when I desire it,' said Grandcourt. His eyes were still fixed upon her, and she felt her own eyes narrowing under them as if to shut out an entering pain. Of what use was the rebellion within her? She could say nothing that would not hurt her worse than submission. Turning slowly and covering herself again, she went to her dressing-room. As she reached out the diamonds it occurred to her that her unwillingness to wear them might have already raised a suspicion in Grandcourt that she had some knowledge about them which he had not given her. She fancied that his eyes showed a delight in torturing her. How could she be defiant? She had nothing to say that would touch him—nothing but what would give him a more painful grasp of her consciousness. 'He delights in making the dogs and horses quail: that is half his pleasure in calling them his,' she said to herself, as she opened the jewel-case with a shivering sensation. 'It will be so with me; and I shall quail. What else is there for me? I will not say to the world, "Pity me."' She was about to ring for her maid when she heard the door open behind her. It was Grandcourt who came in. 'You want some one to fasten them,' he said, coming toward her. She did not answer, but simply stood still, leaving him to take out the ornaments and fasten them as he would. . . . 'What makes you so cold?' said Grandcourt, when he had fastened the last ear-ring. 'Pray put plenty of furs on. I hate to see a woman come into a room look-

ing frozen. If you are to appear as a bride at all, appear decently.'"

## II

The tragedy can scarcely be said to culminate in the scene of Grandcourt's death, which Gwendolen herself describes to Deronda, not knowing whether she has really been willing he should drown, and not seeking to defend herself in telling how she leaped to him with a rope at last, too late. But it ends there, and there is perhaps a supreme effect in this uncertainty of hers which agonizes as much as it consoles. It sets the seal to a record as true to human nature as it is terrible, and testifies to a power in the writer which is nowhere surpassed in the art which her great conscience exalted heaven-high above its wonted office of amusing.

To revert from her character and its development, to that of Janet Dempster in "Scenes of Clerical Life," is a curious and valuable experience for the student of George Eliot's work. We go from an ethicism in Gwendolen Harleth's case as rootless and flowerless as that of the stoics back to an ideal of conduct sprung from a sense of the power not ourselves that makes for righteousness, and to a faith in the fatherly love of the Judge of all the earth, which promises itself compensation hereafter for whatever is wrong here. In "Daniel Deronda," George Eliot had reached that moment of her agnosticism when it seemed enough to "join the choir invisible" of those whose personality has indeed perished forever, but whose character remains to help and comfort us who are still wandering through this twilight toward the eternal night. It involved a sublime self-abnegation which we cannot contemplate without a glow of pride in the humanity so self-sufficing, and a thrill of reverent admiration. It was magnificent, and

I will not withhold my sense that if it was sincere it transcended the rapture of martyrdom. All the more I feel bound to recognize the meek beauty of the faith which was the spring and inspiration of the author's art in "Janet's Repentance." There right conduct was not self-derived, but was an effect of the universal law of love which remembers and considers every minutest atom of life, and guards the finite human consciousness through its affinity to the infinite and the divine. It is not pertinent to pronounce upon the moral quality of the two creative moods of the author but only to note their difference.

There is socially almost as wide a difference between Gwendolen Harleth and Janet Dempster, who are alike in their unhappiness and its common source in a cruel marriage. But Gwendolen has sought her misery through her ambition, and Janet's has come to her through her love, and it has had power to drag her down through the refuge she takes from it, but never to spoil her noble nature. Her husband, a shrewd and able lawyer in a provincial town, is himself a drunkard, and when he is in drink, he is of a brutal cruelty to his wife which has at last driven her to try his vice as a means of deadening her misery from it. We have seen how Grandcourt could torture his bride; now let us see how, on another level of life, Dempster could devote a yet more helpless victim to a less guilty rage, when he comes home imbruted by his cups.

"There was a large heavy knocker on the green door, and though Mr. Dempster carried a latch-key, he sometimes chose to use the knocker. He chose to do so now. The thunder resounded through Orchard Street, and, after a single minute, there was a second clap, louder than the first. Another minute, and still the door was not opened; whereupon Mr. Dempster, muttering, took out his latch-key, and, with less difficulty than might

have been expected, thrust it into the door. When he opened the door the passage was dark. 'Janet!' in the loudest rasping tone, was the next sound that rang through the house. 'Janet!' again—before a slow step was heard on the stairs, and a distant light began to flicker on the wall of the passage. 'Curse you! you creeping idiot! Come faster, can't you?' Yet a few seconds, and the figure of a tall woman, holding aslant a heavy-plated drawing-room candlestick, appeared at the turning of the passage that led to the broader entrance. She had on a light dress which sat loosely about her figure, but did not disguise its liberal, graceful outline. A heavy mass of straight jet-black hair had escaped from its fastening, and hung over her shoulders. Her grandly cut features, pale with the natural paleness of a brunette, had premature lines about them, telling that the years had been lengthened by sorrow, and the delicately curved nostril, which seemed made to quiver with the proud consciousness of power and beauty, must have quivered to the heart-piercing griefs which had given that worn look to the corners of her mouth. Her wide-open black eyes had a strangely fixed, sightless gaze, as she paused at the turning and stood silent before her husband. 'I'll teach you to keep me waiting in the dark, you pale staring fool!' he said, advancing with his slow drunken step. 'What, you've been drinking again, have you? I'll beat you into your senses.' He laid his hand with a firm grip on her shoulder, turned her round, and pushed her slowly before him along the passage and through the dining-room door, which stood wide open on their left hand.

"There was a portrait of Janet's mother, a gray-haired, dark-eyed old woman, in a neatly fluted cap, hanging over the mantel-piece. Surely the aged eyes take on a look of anguish as they see Janet—not trem-

bling, no! it would be better if she trembled—standing stupidly unmoved in her great beauty, while the heavy arm is lifted to strike her. The blow falls—another—and another. Surely the mother hears that cry—'O Robert! pity! pity!' Poor gray-haired woman! Was it for this you suffered a mother's pangs in your lone widowhood five-and-thirty years ago? Was it for this you kept the little worn morocco shoes Janet had first run in, and kissed them day by day when she was away from you, a tall girl at school? Was it for this you looked so proudly at her when she came back to you in her rich pale beauty, like a tall white arum that had just unfolded its grand pure curves to the sun?"

The author's recurrence in her latest heroine to the pale-dark beauty of her earliest is an interesting evidence of the persistence of an ideal, and the mind's unconscious obedience to it; but Janet is of far simpler stuff than Gwendolen in every way, and one is made to feel her weaker and tenderer through her very largeness of physique. She is indeed of a loving and forgiving sort, and there is something most womanly and most pitiful in her eagerness to forget her husband's brutality as soon as the moment of it is past. There could be nothing more pathetic than her willingness to lend herself to his wish of burlesquing the young curate who is devotedly preaching and living Christianity in the town, but who has fallen under the drunken lawyer's condemnation as a hypocrite. She gives all her cleverness to this miserable work with no thought but of pleasing the husband who beats her, and for the time he is pleased. But another time comes when she meets his fury with rebellion and then the end comes.

"About eleven the party dispersed, with the exception of Mr. Budd, who had joined them after dinner, and appeared disposed to stay drinking a little longer. Janet began to hope that he would stay long enough for Demp-

ster to become heavy and stupid, and so fall asleep downstairs, which was a rare but occasional ending of his nights. She told the servants to sit up no longer, and she herself undressed and went to bed, trying to cheat her imagination into the belief that the day was ended for her. But when she lay down, she became more intensely awake than ever. Everything she had taken this evening seemed only to stimulate her senses and her apprehensions to new vividness. Her heart beat violently, and she heard every sound in the house. At last, when it was twelve, she heard Mr. Budd go out; she heard the door slam. Dempster had not moved. Was he asleep? Would he forget? The minutes seemed long, while, with a quickening pulse, she was on the stretch to catch every sound. 'Janet!' The loud jarring voice seemed to strike her like a hurled weapon. 'Janet!' he called again, moving out of the dining-room to the foot of the stairs. There was a pause of a moment. 'If you don't come, I'll kill you.' Another pause, and she heard him turn back into the dining-room. Perhaps he *would* kill her. Let him. Life was as hideous as death. For years she had been rushing on to some unknown but certain horror; and now she was close upon it. She was almost glad. She was in a state of flushed feverish defiance that neutralized her woman's terrors. She heard his heavy step on the stairs; she saw the slowly advancing light. Then she saw the tall, massive figure and the heavy face, now fierce with drunken rage. He had nothing but the candle in his hand. He set it down on the table and advanced close to the bed. 'So you think you'll defy me, do you? We'll see how long that will last. Get up, madam; out of bed this instant!' In the close presence of the dreadful man—of this huge, crushing force, armed with savage will—poor Janet's desperate defiance all forsook her, and her terrors came back. Trembling she got up,

and stood helpless in her night-dress before her husband. He seized her with his heavy grasp by the shoulder and pushed her before him. 'I'll cool your hot spirit for you! I'll teach you to brave me!' Slowly he pushed her along before him, down stairs and through the passage, where a small oil-lamp was still flickering. What was he going to do to her? She thought every moment he was going to dash her before him on the ground. But she gave no scream—she only trembled. He pushed her on to the entrance, and held her firmly in his grasp while he lifted the latch of the door. Then he opened the door a little way, thrust her out through it and slammed it behind her. For a short space it seemed like a deliverance to Janet. The harsh northeast wind, that blew through her thin night-dress and sent her long, heavy black hair streaming, seemed like the breath of pity after the grasp of that threatening monster. But soon the sense of release from an overpowering terror gave away before the sense of the fate that had really come upon her. This, then, was what she had been travelling toward through her long years of misery! Not yet death. Oh! if she had been brave enough for it, death would have been better."

## III

These are dreadful things, and so squalid that they must shock the refined reader; but who that knows life can deny that they happen? They happen far oftener than is ever known, and if the veil could be lifted from many marriages that show a fair outside, what hideous things should not we see! It is not ill, but it is very well to be confronted with the ugly realities, the surviving savageries, that the smug hypocrisy of civilization denies; for till we recognize them we shall not abate

them, or even try to do so. In such a scene as this we have no outlaw beating down the suppliant figure of his paramour, as in the burglar's butchery of Nancy Sikes, but a man of education and of a certain position, wreaking his frenzy of drink and hate upon a woman not guiltless of his own vice, but utterly devoted to him at her worst. Who can doubt as to the relative value of the pictures? As to the art in them respectively, we almost lose sight of the superiority of George Eliot's in sense of her superior morality.

This had not yet become the pure ethicism of her final evolution. It was not yet divorced from her strong religious tradition, but was still more vitally related to it; and when she imagined Janet Dempster redeemed and purified, it was through confession and submission to the poor man whom she has helped her wicked husband to deride, and who comes to her help first owning his own frailty and imperfection. There might be something, there might be much, to criticise in the conduct of the story after Janet's repentance begins. It is difficult to keep the true pathos of the situation free from sentimentality; but it is wrought out mainly with a sincerity both ethical and æsthetical, and where it fails in either effect it is not through the author's want of faith in her ideal or her method. No one can be held to stricter account than this. It is for others to surpass George Eliot in motive or handling, if they can, in dealing with such a situation, and to bring greater right and clearer reason to it. I will own that I do not see how this could be done.

## ANTHONY TROLLOPE'S LILY DALE

THERE are no two English novelists of the period we call Victorian who are more unlike and yet more characteristically English than George Eliot and Anthony Trollope. It is strange that in their far greater truth to English life, they should not be named together, like Dickens and Thackeray, as the representative English novelists of their time; but they are not, and it is doubtful if time will repair the injustice which long ago became inveterate. They are both far greater artists, far greater intellectual and moral forces, than the masters whose names stand for Victorian fiction. They paint English manners with a fidelity simply inconceivable of Dickens and Thackeray, and the problems they deal with are of an importance and interest surpassingly greater. On the psychological side, George Eliot's transcendent power has been fully recognized, but the greatness of her "world," and its wide inclusiveness, has not been as duly certified by criticism; just as in Anthony Trollope's case, his immense acquaintance with society in all its ranks and orders has taken the mind of his critics from his profound and even subtle proficiency in the region of motive. No one fails to note the attention given to questions of conscience in George Eliot's novels; they are seen always present or imminent; but few readers seem to have been aware how very largely these questions enter into the texture and color of Anthony Trollope's fiction. The difference appears to be that she concerns herself with

what we may call the puritanic conscience, and he with what we may call the episcopal conscience. Their characters are equally far from the unmoral region in which, say, Mr. Hardy's quasi-pagans dwell.

## I

In all fiction I doubt if there is a lovelier or sweeter conscience-story than that of "The Warden." Unhappily for the purpose of these papers, we are barred from that study of "The Warden" which we might make in proof of Trollope's psychological power by the fact that it is so wholly the story of a gentle and conscientious old man as scarcely to have a heroine. Eleanor Harding, the daughter of the Warden, must stand for the heroine; and though she is his worthy daughter, and is most dramatically circumstanced in her relation to her lover, whose conscience obliges him to make the wardenship untenable to a man of her father's conscience, she is not of such structural value in the story that one strongly feels or remembers her part in it. The situation is in itself so affecting, so charming, that it might constitute Eleanor Harding a heroine of the first order; but something that may be called want of charm in the girl herself—perhaps a reflex effect from her history as it is prolonged into her second marriage with Dean Arabin after poor John Bold has sacrificed his conscience to his love of her—may be at fault; but at any rate, the mind after grappling with her idea, relaxes its hold, and turns away to cling to that of Lily Dale in the divers and sundry books where she appears and reappears.

"The Small House at Allington," where we first meet her, is no such symmetrically proportioned and excellently fashioned work of art as "The Warden,"

which stands almost sole among the author's books for form. It is a very well balanced and compactly built story, however, and strongly held together by uncommon singleness of motive. The love of Lily Dale for Adolphus Crosbie who jilts her, after their engagement, and marries Lady Alexandrina de Courcy, is the interest which the whole life of the book centres about so unremittingly that in the retrospect it seems the only interest; but there is a subsidiary interest in the love of John Eames for Lily Dale vital enough to prolong itself through the wandering ways of "The Last Chronicle of Barset," and really essential to the full evolution of Lily's fate. Without this we could not know that her hapless love had become so largely herself that when it was crushed there was not enough of her left together for a second and happier passion. She lived to realize that her false lover had been too basely cruel, not for her forgiveness, but for her endurance. She lived to refuse him when he offered himself again after his wife's death; she lived to see him, and even in a social exigency to have him speak to her; but though she lived to know that he was nothing to her forever, she lived also to make sure that no man could be anything to her as a lover evermore. This put an end to the long, brave hopes of Johnny Eames, who was not always, as high as his hopes, but always delightfully a human being, such as Lily might well be glad to have for a friend.

It cannot be said that the concluding passages of her story are as effectively managed as those of what is more distinctly her tragedy; and yet her final and decisive refusal of Eames is truly the climax of the whole. Her character triumphs, her nature remains good and kind, but her life, that poor little existence which is all there is of her on earth, is spoiled of that which should have made its supreme happiness. It is a great story, whose absolute fidelity to manners, and whose reliance

upon the essential strength of the motive must exalt it in the esteem of those accustomed to think of what they read.

## II

If any such reader happens himself to be of that period of the early eighteen-sixties to which Lily Dale's romantic young girlhood belonged, and in which young girlhood was sweeter than it has ever been since, he will see her as she first appeared to Adolphus Crosbie. He will know that she wore a large hoop, which tilted enough when she played croquet to give a glimpse of her white stockings; that her loose sleeves were confined at the wrists with narrow little linen cuffs matching a little linen collar at her neck; and that everything was very plain and smooth about her. She would have on a pork-pie hat, which was thought very *chic* in the days before it was known what *chic* was, the word itself being not yet; and but for the author, I should say that she wore her hair in a net of rather a heavy velvet mesh. The author, however, contends that she wore it in "simple braids," and that "it was not flaxen hair, and yet it was very light. Nor did it approach auburn; and yet there ran through it a golden tint that gave it a distinct brightness of its own." Her eyes were "brightly blue . . . and seldom kept by any want of courage from fixing themselves where they pleased." Her face was not "perfectly oval"; her nose was "somewhat broader than it should be; she had a dimple in her decided chin. She was something below the middle height," the time of the tall heroine not having come yet, and she was "very fair, so that the soft tint of color which relieved her complexion was rather acknowledged than distinctly seen."

This was the sort of girl who gave her heart in per-

fect abandon of passion and hero-worship to as selfish a scoundrel as ever was recreant to his plighted troth. The worst of Adolphus Crosbie is that he is no worse in nature than he is. Worse in conduct he could not be; and yet in his way he always loved Lily Dale, and he suffered in betraying her. But he did betray her; he first won her heart in her quiet home at Allington under her mother's approving eyes, and then when he found that her uncle, Squire Dale, would not meet his hopes as to settlements, went from her with renewed vows of constancy, and offered himself to Lady Alexandrina. His engagement to Lily was already known and she had to bear the public shame as well as the secret anguish of being jilted. The thing was as bad as it could be, but how bad it was for Lily Dale can be known only to those familiar with her history, and these do not need telling. I wish I might send to it those unfamiliar with it, for I do not believe that a story of simple heart-break, as it may happen in good society, without the squalid adjuncts of social perdition or infamy for the victim, has ever been so truly told. Lily Dale was jilted by the man whom she had absolutely trusted; and she had to gather up her broken life and make what she could of it. The mild but strong resistance she opposes to her fate begins with her first knowledge of it. She has never been represented as very beautiful or brilliant, but merely as sweet and good and kind, with an unselfish common-sense which has served her well with every one but the wretch who stole her heart from her. These great qualities—for, oh! dear young ladies, these are the great qualities—avail her in the hour of her disaster, when she must spare herself in order to spare others, and first of all, the poor mother whom her wretched lover has made the messenger of his treason to her.

Crosbie had written to Mrs. Dale from Courcy Castle, where he had just been accepted by Lady Alexandrina,

and had asked her to tell Lily, enclosing a brief note for her which her mother was to give her if she thought best. "Now, they [the letters] had been read by her to whom they had been addressed, and the daughter was standing before the mother to hear her doom. 'Tell me all at once,' Lily had said; but in what words was her mother to tell her? . . . 'Is it from him, mamma? May I read it? He cannot be—' 'It is from Mr. Crosbie.' 'Is he ill, mamma? Tell me at once. If he is ill I will go to him.' 'No, my darling, he is not ill. Not yet;—do not read it yet. Oh, Lily! It brings bad news; very bad news.' . . . 'Mamma,' said Lily, 'whatever it is, I must, of course, be made to know it. I begin to guess the truth. It will pain you to say it. Shall I read the letter?' Mrs. Dale was astonished at her calmness. It could not be that she had guessed the truth, or she would not stand like that, with tearless eyes and unquelled courage before her. 'You shall read it, but I ought to tell you first. Oh, my child, my own one!' Lily was now leaning against the bed, and her mother was standing over her, caressing her. 'Then tell me,' said she. 'But I know what it is. He has thought it all over while away from me, and he finds that it must not be as we have supposed. Before he went I offered to release him, and now he knows that he had better accept my offer. Is it so, mamma?' In answer to this Mrs. Dale did not speak, but Lily understood from her signs that it was so. 'He might have written it to me, myself,' said Lily, very proudly. 'Mamma, we will go down to breakfast. He has sent nothing to me, then?' 'There is a note. He bids me read it, but I have not opened it. It is here.' 'Give it me,' said Lily, almost sternly. 'Let me have his last words to me;' and she took the note from her mother's hands. 'Lily,' said the note, 'your mother will have told you all. Before you read these few words

you will know that you have trusted one who was quite untrustworthy. I know that you will hate me.—I cannot even ask you to forgive me. You will let me pray that you may yet be happy.—A. C.' She read these few words, still leaning against the bed. Then she got up, and walking to a chair, seated herself with her back to her mother. Mrs. Dale moving silently after her stood over the back of the chair, not daring to speak to her. So she sat for some five minutes, with her eyes fixed upon the open window, and with Crosbie's note in her hand. 'I will not hate him, and I do forgive him,' she said at last, struggling to command her voice, and hardly showing that she could not altogether succeed in her attempt. 'I may not write to him again, but you shall write and tell him so. Now we will go down to breakfast.' And so saying, she got up from her chair Mrs. Dale almost feared to speak to her, her composure was so complete, and her manner so stern and fixed. . . . 'You frighten me, Lily,' she said. 'Your very calmness frightens me.' 'Dear mamma!' and the poor girl absolutely smiled as she embraced her mother, 'You need not be frightened by my calmness. I know the truth well. I have been very unfortunate;—very. The brightest hopes of my life are all gone;—and I shall never again see him whom I love beyond all the world!' Then at last she broke down, and wept in her mother's arms. There was not a word of anger spoken then against him who had done all this. Mrs. Dale felt that she did not dare to speak in anger against him, and words of anger were not likely to come from poor Lily. She, indeed, hitherto, did not know the whole of his offence, for she had not read his letter. 'Give it me, mamma,' she said at last. 'It has to be done sooner or later.' 'Not now, Lily. I have told you all,—all that you need know at present.' 'Yes; now, mamma,' and again that sweet silvery voice became stern. 'I will

"SO SHE SAT . . . WITH HER EYES FIXED UPON THE OPEN WINDOW"

read it now, and there shall be an end.' Whereupon Mrs. Dale gave her the letter and she read it in silence. Her mother, though standing somewhat behind her, watched her narrowly as she did so. She was now lying over upon the bed, and the letter was on the pillow, as she propped herself upon her arm. Her tears were running, and ever and again she would stop to dry her eyes. Her sobs too were very audible, but she went on steadily with her reading till she came to the line on which Crosbie told that he had already engaged himself to another woman. Then her mother could see that she paused suddenly, and that a shudder slightly convulsed all her limbs. 'He has been very quick,' she said, almost in a whisper; and then she finished the letter. 'Tell him, mamma,' she said 'that I do forgive him, and I will not hate him. You will tell him that, —from me; will you not?' And then she raised herself from the bed. . . . 'You must, mamma; or, if you do not, I shall do so. Remember that I love him. You know what it is to have loved one single man. He has made me very unhappy; I hardly know yet how unhappy. But I have loved him, and do love him. I believe, in my heart, that he still loves me. Where this has been there must not be hatred and unforgiveness.' 'I will pray that I may become able to forgive him,' said Mrs. Dale. 'But you must write to him those words. Indeed you must, mamma! "She bids me tell you that she has forgiven you, and will not hate you." Promise me that!' 'I can make no promise now, Lily. I will think about it, and endeavor to do my duty.' Lily was now seated, and was holding the skirt of her mother's dress. 'Mamma,' she said, looking up into her mother's face, 'you must be very good to me now; and I must be very good to you. We shall be always together now. I must be your friend and counsellor; and be everything to you, more than ever. I must fall

in love with you now;' and she smiled again, and the tears were almost dry upon her cheeks."

## III

I think the quiet truth of this scene, full of the gentle self-control of a nature superior to the impulses of passion, is worth worlds of "passion." It is really so that such a girl as Lily Dale would have spoken and acted, and the readers of latter-day romance are the losers that such types of girlhood are no longer presented to them. In the present default I could not send the girls of this period back to better company than hers, who was the contemporary of their mothers, and often their companion.

It will not be contended by any true friend of hers that she was perfectly wise; but what she tried to do she did. She did forgive the man who had so atrociously wronged her; in a manner she did fall in love with her mother, and lived to console and support her under the blow that had fallen upon her through her own heart. In the lapse of time she achieved a calm that if never gay was often cheerful. After much honest endeavor in behalf of Johnny Eames, she found it was no longer in her to love any man again. When, with incredible meanness, Crosbie offered himself, after his wife's death, she refused him, not ungently; when later they chanced to meet she found that she no longer cared even for the man he had once seemed. He was no longer her hero, her idol, and the wonder was that he could ever have been. She had survived her illusion, but there could never be any other—for love is always an illusion—in its place. She had ceased to suffer from the hurt he had done her, but not from the memory of her suffering. This had full power upon her when chance—a freak or

a duty of fate—brought them together again. There were, in fact, two last meetings of this sort, both treated with a dignity, a repose, worthy of the material, and with a true, strong emotion very uncommon in the author, who had caught from Thackeray the bad habit of twaddling about his women, and could not often leave them so entirely alone, to work themselves out in their own way, as he does Lily Dale in this case. In the first of the meetings Lily was riding with her cousin Bernard and his betrothed in Rotten Row, when "on a sudden, coming slowly towards her along the diverging path and leaning on the arm of another man, she saw,—Adolphus Crosbie. She had never seen him since a day on which she had parted from him with many kisses,—with warm, pressing, eager kisses,—of which she had been nowhat ashamed. He had then been to her almost as her husband. She had trusted him entirely, and had thrown herself into his arms with a full reliance. There is often much of reticence on the part of a woman towards a man to whom she is engaged, something also of shamefacedness occasionally. There exists a shadow of doubt, at least of that hesitation which shows that in spite of vows the woman knows that a change may come, and that provision for such possible steps backward should always be within her reach. But Lily had cast all such caution to the winds. She had given herself to the man entirely, and had determined that she would sink or swim, stand or fall, live or die, by him and by his truth. He had been as false as hell. She had been in his arms, clinging to him, kissing him, swearing that her only pleasure in the world was to be with him,—with him her treasure, her promised husband; and within a month, a week, he had been false to her. There had come upon her crushing tidings, and she had for days wondered at herself that they had not killed her. But she had

lived, and had forgiven him. She had still loved him, and had received new offers from him, which had been answered as the reader knows. But she had never seen him since the day on which she had parted from him at Allington, without a doubt as to his faith. Now he was before her, walking on the footpath, almost within reach of her whip. . . . Then he raised his eyes and saw Lily's side-face, and recognized her. Had he seen her before he had been stopped on his way I think he would have passed on, endeavoring to escape observation. But as it was, his feet had been arrested before he knew of her close vicinity, and now it would seem that he was afraid of her, and was flying from her, were he at once to walk off, leaving his friend behind him. And he knew that she had seen him, and had recognized him, and was now suffering from his presence. He could not but perceive that it was so from the fixedness of her face, and from the constrained manner in which she gazed before her. . . . He could not take his eyes from off her. He could see that she was as pretty as ever, that she was but very little altered. She was, in truth, somewhat stouter than in the old days, but of that he took no special notice. Should he speak to her? Should he try to catch her eye, and then raise his hat? Should he go up to her horse's head boldly and ask her to let bygones be bygones? . . . Or should he simply ask her after her health. He made one step towards her, and he saw that the face became more rigid and more fixed than before, and then he desisted. He told himself that he was simply hateful to her. He thought that he could perceive that there was no tenderness mixed with her unabated anger. At this moment Bernard Dale and Emily came close upon him, and Bernard saw him at once. . . . 'Dunn,' he said, 'I think we will ride on,' and he put his horse into a trot. . . . 'Is there anything the matter?' said Emily to her lover.

'Nothing specially the matter,' he replied; 'but you were standing in company with the greatest blackguard that ever lived, and I thought we had better change our ground.' 'Bernard!' said Lily, flashing on him with all the fire which her eyes could command. Then she remembered that she could not reprimand him for the offence of such abuse in such a company; so she reined in her horse and fell a-weeping."

The second and the last of the two encounters between Lily and Crosbie took place in a great London house, where Lily was looking at the pictures, with her cousin and his friends:

"Mrs. Harold Smith had declared that she would not look at another painting till the exhibition was open; three of the ladies were seated in the drawing-room, and Siph Dunn was standing before them, lecturing about art as though he had been brought up on the ancient masters; Emily and Bernard were lingering behind, and the others were simply delaying their departure till the truant lovers should have caught them. At this moment two gentlemen entered the room from the gallery, and the two gentlemen were Fowler Pratt and Adolphus Crosbie. All the party except Mrs. Thorne knew Crosbie personally, and all of them except Mrs. Harold Smith knew something of the story of what had occurred between Crosbie and Lily. Siph Dunn had learned it all since the meeting in the Park, having nearly learned it all from what he had seen there with his eyes. But Mrs. Thorne, who knew Lily's story, did not know Crosbie's appearance. . . . Crosbie would have gone on, but that in this attempt to do so he passed close by the chair on which Mrs. Harold Smith was sitting, and that he was accosted by her. 'Mr. Crosbie,' she said, 'I haven't seen you for an age. Has it come to pass that you have buried yourself entirely?' He did not know how to extricate himself so as to move on at

once. He paused, and hesitated, and then stopped, and made an attempt to talk to Mrs. Smith as though he were at his ease. The attempt was anything but successful; but having once stopped, he did not know how to put himself in motion again, so that he might escape. At this moment Bernard Dale and Emily Dunstable came up and joined the group; but neither of them had discovered who Crosbie was till they were close upon him. . . . Crosbie, in his attempt to talk to Mrs. Smith, had smiled and simpered,—and had then felt that to smile and simper before Lily Dale, with a pretended indifference to her presence, was false on his part, and would seem to be mean. He would have avoided Lily for both their sakes, had it been possible; but it was no longer possible, and he could not keep his eyes from her face. Hardly knowing what he did, he bowed to her, lifted his hat, and uttered some word of greeting. Lily, from the moment that she had perceived his presence, had looked straight before her, with something almost of fierceness in her eyes. . . . Now, when he saluted her, she turned her face full upon him, and bowed to him. Then she rose from her seat, and made her way, between Siph Dunn and Pratt, out of the circle. The blood had mounted to her face and suffused it all, and her whole manner was such that it could escape the observation of none who stood there. Even Mrs. Harold Smith had seen it, and had read the story. As soon as she was on her feet, Bernard had dropped Emily's hand, and offered his arm to his cousin. 'Lily,' he said out loud, 'you had better let me take you away. It is a misfortune that you have been subjected to the insult of such a greeting.' The misfortune of the encounter had become too plain to admit of its being hidden under any of the ordinary veils of society. Crosbie's salutation had been made before the eyes of them all, and in

the midst of absolute silence, and Lily had risen with so queenlike a demeanor, and had moved with so stately a step, that it was impossible that any one concerned should pretend to ignore the facts of the scene that had occurred. Crosbie was still standing close to Mrs. Harold Smith, Mrs. Thorne had risen from her seat, and the words which Bernard Dale had uttered were still sounding in the ears of them all. 'Shall I see after the carriage?' said Siph Dunn."

## IV

I call this all extremely good work. I do not call it fine work, as to the mere artistry; it is a little too plain and matter-of-fact for that. A greater artist than Trollope would have had a more sparing touch in his realism: it is not so that Tourguénief, or Björnson, or Flaubert, or Mr. Hardy would have presented these scenes. A greater artist than Trollope psychologically would have had a greater subtlety in his divinations and revelations: it is not so that Hawthorne, or Tolstoy, or Mr. James would have shown us the soul of a girl in such a moment of martyry. They would all, both realists and psychologists, have shown us her naked soul, in such wise that we should have been less abashed than by her soul as we see it here, with its clothes on. But it was strictly Trollope's business to show us her soul with its clothes on, for in the world he deals with, the soul as well as the body is clothed, and wears its decorums and conventions as constantly. It is when Trollope shows the soul moving in these that he is most a master; it is when he sometimes strips them away, and bluntly exposes the soul, instead of letting it betray itself, that he is least a master.

He is mostly at his worst in "The Last Chronicle of Barset," where in his cleaning-up of all the odds and

ends of life left over from the other stories relating to the Barchester neighborhood, he leaves few shreds and patches for the reader's imagination to penetrate. Yet it is from "The Last Chronicle" that the two last scenes of Lily Dale's suffering are taken, and it is in "The Last Chronicle" that the tremendous psychical tragedy of the perpetual curate of Hogglestock finally slips through the author's thumb-fingered hold. Lily's two encounters with Crosbie are of the quality of what is sublimest in the dark agony of Josiah Crawley, and even the somewhat perfunctory drama of the subsequent scenes with Johnny Eames is above the ordinary level of the book.

But it is hard to believe in this part of Lily's experience. Her entirely credible experience ends with that last encounter with Crosbie; what follows with Eames, who has loved her from childhood, and is left loving her in her resolute old-maidhood, is something that the reader feels it his duty to help the author out with in deference to the original implications of her story. Yet, once in a way, why is it not well to see a thing of this sort through to a natural conclusion? It is certainly of true interest, if not the most poignant interest; and though the love-making of Eames is somewhat tediously prolonged, and his offers somewhat incredibly repeated, still it is all important in rounding out and setting in full relief the story of Lily Dale.

That story, I say it again, is one of the most interesting I know, one of the most sincerely and courageously treated. One feels at every moment its essential and specific veracity. It is a tragedy of the most harrowing sort, and yet it is altogether wholesome and consoling. To be superior to fate one must be the trusting worshipper of omnipotence, and it was in the shelter of this stronghold that such a girl as Lily Dale, with no touch of pietism or word of cant, found shelter and safety.

## ANTHONY TROLLOPE'S LUCY ROBARTS AND GRISELDA GRANTLY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE was the author of thirty-nine or forty novels, relating nearly all of them to the contemporary English society life, which he seems to have known better than any other English novelist. Out of the whole number the novels which will come first to the reader's mind are those relating to clerical society as it existed during the eighteen fifties and sixties in the imaginary cathedral town of Barchester; and but for the explicit denial in his autobiography, one might next have said that he had made an exhaustive study of the bishops, deans, archdeacons, canons, vicars, and curates, *tutti quanti*, with their wives, sisters, aunts, and cousins, in the whole variety of their duties and pleasures, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears. He was at the trouble to assure his believers, however, that he did not specifically or scientifically know the types he makes so interesting, and was only their casual and involuntary observer; yet such is the inherent evidence against him that we must regard his pretence as the foible of a writer who would rather be thought inspired than informed, and whose caprice it was to prefer the reputation of having made a lot of lucky guesses to that of having made a series of careful studies.

He had several foibles, that poor Anthony Trollope, who wrote so much better of English life than any one except Jane Austen and George Eliot, but who wished to write like Thackeray. He copied Thackeray's most

offensive and inartistic confidential attitude, though he knew him, and had the courage to pronounce him, false to certain aspects of English society. He says frankly that he never met any such people among the nobility and gentry as the Marquis of Steyn and Sir Pitt Crawley; he apparently met many others quite as vulgar and wicked, but not these self-evident caricatures and exaggerations; and he is the more to be trusted because he is so honest about their vulgarity and wickedness. He does not mock or scourge his bad aristocrats as Thackeray does; there is nothing of the satirist in him; and he is all the more impressive as a moralist because he contents himself with simply letting us see them as they are. He has no apparent purpose of reforming them; at times you have from him the notion that reform of any sort, among the hierarchy or nobility, might constitute a danger to society, and would be worth less than it would cost. He even imparts a sense of such entire approval of society conditions, such unquestioning fealty to the existing order, that you hardly know whether to admire more the skill with which he portrays it, or the seriousness with which he accepts it and honors it.

## I

"Framley Parsonage" is almost a typical novel of the sort which displays Trollope's distinguishing strength and weakness, and I think myself it is a most delightful story, running its course through a variety of characteristic incident, and prospering finally in the happy marriage of the first heroine, Lucy Robarts, and the brilliant marriage of the second heroine, Griselda Grantly.

As no reader of the story can have forgotten, Lucy is

the daughter of a successful country doctor, and the pretty young sister of Rev. Mark Robarts, whom Lady Lufton has given the living of Framley because her son and he have always been friends, and because in her rather high and mighty, but perfectly kind and conscientious way, she has loved him from his boyhood. She is willing to love his pretty young sister, too, in a way, when she comes to the parsonage, after the doctor's death, but it is no part of her plan that young Lord Lufton, her son, shall love Lucy Robarts rather more than he has ever loved her brother. This is what happens, however, and the facts which Lucy has to face, if she accepts Lord Lufton, are the deep displeasure and disappointment of Lady Lufton, who means her son for Griselda Grantly, or if she rejects him the still deeper displeasure and disappointment of Lord Lufton

She will share the displeasure in Lady Lufton's case, for she does not feel it quite right to come and get her son away; and in Lord Lufton's case she will share the disappointment, for she is as much in love with him as he is with her. The natural thing for a romantic girl to do is to deny her love, since Lord Lufton will not take any other sort of no for an answer, and the natural thing for a sensible girl to do is to confess it when her lover has sufficiently insisted. Lucy being both romantic and sensible, does both these natural things in the succession indicated; and all ends well. She never ceases to be little and dark, if pretty, and so far inadequate to her rank, and Griselda Grantly never ceases to be tall and fair and cold, and most suitable for the wife and mother of aristocracy; but since Lord Lufton will not have Griselda in spite of her willingness, and will most passionately and perversely have Lucy in spite of her unwillingness, his mother reconciles herself so thoroughly to the inevitable that with the lapse

of time she comes almost to feel as if she had promoted the marriage.

## II

The pretty story is told in the plainest and openest way, with quite miraculous impartiality concerning the rights and duties of all concerned, and with due consideration for their feelings and opinions. There is a current of tragedy, but not the darkest tragedy, running through it from the financial follies of Mark Robarts, to his just but not desperate moral sufferings, and all the rest is love-comedy, just enough shadowed by passing doubt to keep the reader from relaxing in perpetual sunshine. Lord Lufton is such a lover as any girl, romantic or sensible, or both, might be glad to have. Being satisfied that he is in love with Lucy, he has no other idea than to win her, and he goes as promptly and directly about it as possible, without any of the fine scruples concerning other people which distract the girl. His mother is all very well as the means of bringing a Lord Lufton into the world, and he loves and honors her as a good son should; but a Lord Lufton has duties to himself in the choice of a wife that he cannot let even a mother contravene. He therefore puts her and her purposes of Griselda Grantly kindly but firmly aside, and having noticed that Lucy no longer comes to his mother's house, and otherwise avoids meeting him, he goes to the parsonage to find out why. He asks her, and it presently comes to her saying:

"'The world will say that I, the parson's sister, set my cap at the young lord, and that the young lord had made a fool of me.' 'The world shall say no such thing!' said Lord Lufton, very imperiously. 'Ah! but it will. You can no more stop it, than King Canute could the waters. Your mother has interfered wise-

ly to spare me from this; and the only favor that I can ask you is, that you will spare me also.' And then she got up. . . . 'Stop, Lucy!' he said, putting himself between her and the door. 'It must not be Lucy any longer, Lord Lufton; I was madly foolish when I first allowed it.' 'By heavens! but it shall be Lucy—Lucy before all the world. My Lucy, my own Lucy—my heart's best friend, and chosen love. Lucy, there is my hand. How long you may have had my heart, it matters not to say now.' The game was at her feet now, and no doubt she felt her triumph. Her ready wit and speaking lip, not her beauty, had brought him to her side; and now he was forced to acknowledge that her power over him had been supreme. Sooner than leave her he would risk all. She did feel her triumph; but there was nothing in her face to tell him that she did so. As to what she would now do she did not for a moment doubt. He had been precipitated into the declaration he had made not by his love, but by his embarrassment. She had thrown in his teeth the injury which he had done her, and he had then been moved by his generosity to repair that injury by the noblest sacrifice which he could make. But Lucy Robarts was not the girl to accept a sacrifice. He had stepped forward as though he were going to clasp her round the waist, but she receded, and got beyond the reach of his hand. 'Lord Lufton!' she said, 'when you are more cool you will know that this is wrong. The best thing for both of us now is to part.' . . . 'Lucy! do you mean that you cannot learn to love me?' 'I mean that I shall not try. Do not persevere in this, or you will have to hate yourself for your own folly.' 'But I will persevere, till you accept my love, or say, with your hand on your heart, that you cannot and will not love me.' 'Then I must beg you to let me go,' and having so said, she paused while he walked once or twice hurriedly up and down the room. 'And,

Lord Lufton,' she continued, 'if you will leave me now, the words that you have spoken shall be as though they had never been uttered.' 'I care not who knows that they have been uttered. The sooner that they are known to all the world, the better I shall be pleased, unless indeed—' 'Think of your mother, Lord Lufton.' 'What can I do better than give her as a daughter the best and sweetest girl I have ever met? When my mother really knows you, she will love you as I do. Lucy, say one word to me of comfort.' . . . 'You have no right to press me any further,' she said; and sat down upon the sofa, with an angry frown upon her forehead. 'By heavens,' he said, 'I will take no such answer from you till you put your hand upon your heart, and say that you cannot love me.' 'Oh, why should you press me so, Lord Lufton?' 'Why! because my happiness depends upon it; because it behooves me to know the very truth. It has come to this, that I love you with my whole heart, and I must know how your heart stands towards me.' She had now again risen from the sofa, and was looking steadily in his face. 'Lord Lufton,' she said, 'I cannot love you,' and as she spoke she did put her hand, as he had desired, upon her heart. 'Then God help me! for I am very wretched. Goodbye, Lucy,' and he stretched out his hand to her. 'Goodbye, my lord. Do not be angry with me.' 'No, no, no!' and without further speech he left the room and the house and hurried home. . . . And when he was well gone—absolutely out of sight from the window—Lucy walked steadily up to her room, locked the door, and then threw herself on the bed. Why—oh! why had she told such a falsehood? Could anything justify her in a lie? Was it not a lie—knowing as she did that she loved him with all her loving heart? But, then, his mother! and the sneers of the world, which would have declared that she had set her trap, and caught the foolish young lord!

Her pride would not have submitted to that. Strong as her love was, yet her pride was, perhaps, stronger—stronger at any rate during that interview."

## III

Following the scene with Lord Lufton there is a mighty pretty passage between Lucy Robarts and her sister-in-law, to whom she owns the love that she denied to Lord Lufton. I should like to give it all, but perhaps I had better send my readers to the novel for it: they will thank me for sending them to the novel upon any excuse, when they have read it.

"'Well, no, it has been all my own fault; though, for the life of me, Fanny, going back and back, I cannot see where I took the first false step. I do not know where I went wrong. One wrong thing I did, and it is the only thing that I do not regret.' 'What was that, Lucy?' 'I told him a lie.' . . . 'And what has he said to you, Lucy?' 'What? Only this, that he asked me to be his wife.' 'Lord Lufton proposed to you?' . . . 'Here, standing here, on this very spot, on that flower of the carpet, he begged me a dozen times to be his wife. I wonder whether you and Mark would let me cut it out and keep it.' 'And what answer did you make to him?' 'I lied to him, and told him that I did not love him.' 'You refused him?' 'Yes; I refused a live lord. There is some satisfaction in having that to think of; is there not? Fanny, was I wicked to tell that falsehood? . . . Had I thought that it was good for him, that he would not have repented, I would have braved anything—for his sake. Even your frown, for you would have frowned. You would have thought it sacrilege for me to marry Lord Lufton! You know you would.' Mrs. Robarts hardly knew how to say what she thought, or indeed

what she ought to think. . . . What would Lady Lufton say, or think, or feel? What would she say, and think, and feel as to that parsonage from which so deadly a blow would fall upon her? Would she not accuse the vicar and the vicar's wife of the blackest ingratitude? Would life be endurable at Framley under such circumstances as those? 'What you tell me so surprises me, that I hardly as yet know how to speak about it,' said Mrs. Robarts. . . . 'And you would not accept his love?' 'No; I would have nothing to say to it. Look you, I stood here, and putting my hand upon my heart—for he bade me do that—I said that I could not love him.' 'And what then?' 'He went away,—with a look as though he were heart-broken. He crept away slowly, saying that he was the most wretched soul alive. For a minute I believed him and could almost have called him back. But, no, Fanny; do not think that I am over-proud, or conceited about my conquest. He had not reached the gate before he was thanking God for his escape.' 'That I do not believe.'"

This passage develops the character of Lucy Robarts as it remains with the reader, and reveals in her the strain of humor, which still does not render her finally rebellious against the social situation, as the author's humor does not render him rebellious. Both author and heroine accede to it, though they both fully recognize its absurdity, and are aware of its injustice. In fact, the attitude of the characters in all of Trollope's books and the attitude of Trollope himself is one of Asiatic submission to the established order of things, mixed with a strictly Anglo-Saxon freedom of speech concerning it; so that the more democratized American is scarcely more amazed at the one than at the other. No people with less than the English good sense could prevent their social conditions from working more harm than they do; no people with so much good sense ever

"'I WOULD HAVE BRAVED ANYTHING — FOR HIS SAKE'"

abandoned themselves to a status in which the outsider sees no sense at all.

But the law and the gospel of Trollope, a prophet of as clear vision as need be, is that the thing which is must be, and that every one concerned must conform to it in mind and conscience as wisely and decently as possible. It is an immensely frank race, and what Trollope does is to show it with a frankness equalled by that of no other novelist, with a cold-bloodedness, and absence of disagreeable consciousness which almost command respect.

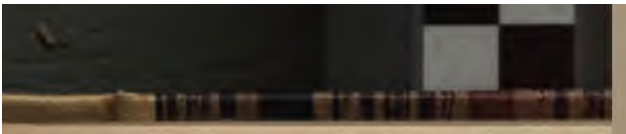
## IV

Nothing could be more respectable than the open understanding, so impossible to two American mothers, between Lady Lufton and Mrs. Archdeacon Grantly that Lord Lufton and Griselda Grantly shall be brought together in such circumstances that the young man shall offer himself and the young girl shall accept him. The intended lovers are themselves in the plot, which miscarries because Lord Lufton, not caring for Griselda to begin with, sees Lucy Robarts at his mother's house where he is meant to see no one but Griselda, and falls in love with Lucy. Griselda is so purely and entirely of her world that she finds no offence to her personal dignity and maidenly modesty in being put in a young man's way for him to fall in love with. That is a perfectly right and proper arrangement; when he will not fall in love with her, she merely resents it in a brief, cold anger, and makes haste to accept another nobleman of higher rank and greater wealth than Lord Lufton.

Trollope has shown no greater mastery than in the handling of this girl's passive egotism and dull, glacial self-sufficiency. It is only such as most abjectly sub-

mit themselves to the world that most dominate it at last, and in the different books that record Griselda Grantly's progress we see her grow naturally and logically, almost inevitably, from an unimpulsive, unresponsive young girl, into a great lady of fashion, a ruler in society. She is always rather stupid, and she never does or says anything to win her way to social supremacy. It may be said that this supremacy comes to her because she is fit for it, and knows how to keep it without the least pains or inconvenience. She is really, in her cold but perfectly adequate nullity, a wonderful achievement, and she is from first to last the same. But she is so null, so negative, that it is difficult to choose any passage which shall dramatically impart the notion of her; but the conversation which her mother has with her, when Mrs. Grantly comes to see her at Lady Lufton's London house, and to find out how the land lies with regard to Lord Lufton, may serve at least as well as another. Toward the middle of this conversation the mother had to be frank since the daughter would not be.

"'What I particularly wanted to say to you was this: I think you should know what are the ideas which Lady Lufton entertains.' 'Her ideas!' said Griselda, who had never troubled herself much in thinking about other people's thoughts. 'Yes, Griselda. While you were staying down at Framley Court, and also, I suppose, since you have been up here in Bruton Street, you must have seen a good deal of—Lord Lufton.' 'He doesn't come very often to Bruton Street,—that is to say, not *very* often.' . . . 'Of course he cannot be at home now as much as he was down in the country, when he was living in the same house,' said Mrs. Grantly, whose business it was to take Lord Lufton's part at the present moment. 'He must be at his club, and at the House of Lords, and in twenty places.' 'He is very





fond of going to parties, and he dances beautifully.' 'I am sure he does. I have seen as much as that myself, and I think I know some one with whom he likes to dance.' And the mother gave her daughter a loving little squeeze. 'Do you mean me, mamma?' 'Yes, I do mean you, my dear. And is it not true? Lady Lufton says that he likes dancing with you better than with any one else in London.' 'I don't know,' said Griselda, looking down upon the ground. . . . 'But young ladies must think of such things, must they not?' 'Must they, mamma?' 'I suppose they do, don't they? The truth is, Griselda, that Lady Lufton thinks that if— Can you guess what it is she thinks?' 'No, mamma.' But that was a fib on Griselda's part. 'She thinks that my Griselda would make the best possible wife in the world for her son; and I think so too. I think that her son will be a very fortunate man if he can get such a wife. And now what do you think, Griselda?' 'I don't think anything, mamma.' . . . 'You don't think anything! But, my darling, you must think. You must make up your mind what would be your answer if Lord Lufton were to propose to you. That is what Lady Lufton wishes him to do.' 'But he never will, mamma.' 'And if he did?' 'But I'm sure he never will. He doesn't think of such a thing at all—and—and—' 'And what, my dear?' 'I don't know, mamma. . . . Lord Lufton thinks a great deal more of Lucy Robarts than he does of—of—of any one else, I believe,' said Griselda, showing now some little animation by her manner, 'dumpy little black thing that she is.' 'Lucy Robarts! . . . Lord Lufton, of course, is bound to be civil to any young lady in his mother's house, and I am quite sure that he has no other idea whatever with regard to Miss Robarts. I certainly cannot speak as to her intellect, for I do not think she opened her mouth in my presence; but—'

'Oh! she has plenty to say for herself, when she pleases. She's a sly little thing.'"

As the reader will have seen, Griselda was quite right, and indeed the one quality she had in positive measure was a subtle cunning, such as in higher minds serves the purposes of divination. She was equal through this, and through an absence of all tenderness, to most of the exigencies of life. Not through principle, but the want of it, she was able philosophically to endure things that wring the heart and break the spirit of other people. After her engagement to Lord Dumbello, while she was at her father's house actively superintending the preparation of her trousseau, there came a rumor, which seemed only too well founded, that her betrothed had gone to Paris to break off the engagement, and her father decided on going up to London to see about it.

"'Susan,' said the archdeacon to his wife, just as he was starting;—at this moment neither of them was in the happiest spirits,—'I think I would say a word of caution to Griselda.' 'Do you feel so much doubt about it as that?' said Mrs. Grantly. . . . On the next morning Mrs. Grantly, with much cunning preparation, went about the task which her husband had left her to perform. It took her long to do, for she was very cunning in the doing of it; but at last it dropped from her in words that there was a possibility—a bare possibility—that some disappointment might even yet be in store for them. 'Do you mean, mamma, that the marriage will be put off?' 'I don't mean to say that I think it will; God forbid! but it is just possible. I dare say that I am very wrong to tell you of this, but I know that you have sense enough to bear it. Papa has gone to London, and we shall hear from him soon.' 'Then, mamma, I had better give them orders not to go on with the marking.'"

I should be puzzled to point out a line in which I thought the artist had gone wrong in this extraordinary portrait. If he had done nothing else it would be sufficient to prove him a master; and it is only one of many masterpieces. It must have been one of the most difficult to do because the formula is so very simple. Not to have mixed other ingredients with the component parts of Griselda's character, or not to have mixed the original ingredients in disproportion, is the highest proof of the artist's mastery. She is never caricatured, never suffered to transcend the limits of her temperament. She is a disagreeable person, because she is cold and selfish, but she is not unjust, and she deserves at the hands of her creator the justice he does her in a final touch, and without which, perhaps, the picture would have wanted perfect relief. After her marriage Lucy Robarts met Lady Dumbello in London. "Lucy had felt that she had been despised by the rich beauty. She also in her turn had disliked, if she had not despised, her rival. But how would it be now? Lady Dumbello could hardly despise her, and yet it did not seem possible that they should meet as friends. They did meet, and Lucy came forward with a pretty eagerness to give her hand to Lady Lufton's late favorite. Lady Dumbello smiled slightly—the same old smile which had come across her face when they two had been first introduced in the Framley drawing-room; the same smile without the variation of a line,—took the offered hand, muttered a word or two, and then receded. It was exactly as she had done before. She had never despised Lucy Robarts. She had accorded to the parson's sister the amount of cordiality with which she usually received her acquaintance; and now she could do no more for the peer's wife." So to the end her perfect congruity is defined.

## ANTHONY TROLLOPE'S MRS. PROUDIE

IF I have not yet said that I think Anthony Trollope the most English of the English novelists I will do so now. Of course Jane Austen and George Eliot might dispute this primacy with him, but both would fail in the comparison, the one because she was too witty and the other because she was too wise, faithfully to mirror the British spirit.

The perpetual play of delicate sarcasm in Jane Austen's books is as alien to the heavy sincerity of that simple soul as the deep psychological implications of George Eliot's; but the make and the manner of Trollope are exactly interpretative of it. All is plain and open in his work; if there is any cutting or thrusting it is not such as leaves the subject to shake itself before it realizes a wound; if there is any philosophizing it is not of the accusing sort which makes the reader feel the fault or the fate of the character as bound with him; and yet Trollope was a true humorist, and as I have already insisted, a profound moralist. He surpassed the only contemporaries worthy to be named with him in very essential things as far as he surpassed those two great women in keeping absolutely the level of the English nature. He was a greater painter of manners than Thackeray because he was neither a sentimentalist nor a caricaturist; and he was of a more convincing imagination than Dickens because he knew and employed the probable facts

in the case and kept himself free of all fantastic contrivances.

## I

He was the author of more books than Dickens, and many more than Thackeray; but in the number of his creations he fell below either, because of his habit, acquired from Thackeray, of carrying the personages of one book into another. Thackeray did this with some half a dozen prominent people; Major Dobbin of "Vanity Fair" reappears in "Pendennis," Pendennis reappears in "Philip," and Beatrix Esmond of "Esmond" reappears in "The Virginians," and so on; but Trollope's principal books are all bound together by the continuity of the principal characters. We have again and again the Duke of Omnium and his congeners; Dr. Thorne and his kindred and connections come and go through different novels; and the Barchester series is a warp in which the same pattern of figures and faces is carried through from the beginning to the end: the Grantlys, the Hardings, the Dales, the Eameses, the Omniums, the Robartses, the Luftons, the Crawleys, and, above all, the Proudies.

There is a fascination, which every writer of fiction will own, in recurring to a type once studied; but the novelist indulges this fancy at some risk of tiring his readers. The fact that he had tired his readers with Mrs. Proudie was brought rudely home to Trollope one day at his club, where he overheard the sighs and groans of a man who was sick of her, at finding her again in the novelist's current story. Trollope says that he then and there resolved to kill her, and in that very story he made an end of her; but it seems to me that his resolution censured both the art and the courage of the novelist, who should have had a faith in himself and his

work superior to his sense of any reader's impatience, and should have been above suffering dictation from it. It is certain, however, that he lost heart and put an end to the admirable (she was artistically most admirable) creature of his invention, to the lasting loss of all lovers of the true, if not the beautiful.

I will not be sure which book one first meets Mrs. Proudie in; one seems, after meeting her, to have known her always; but she pervades the whole Barchester series with her searching and persistent personality. Mrs. Proudie is not merely a shrew and a scold, though she is a shrew, and does scold the bishop dreadfully, and put him to shame before those who should believe him master in his house and office. It is less her ambition than her nature to govern, and she cannot help extending her domain from the bishop to the diocese, and meddling in things which it is mischievous as well as indecorous for her to concern herself with. But in all this she is mainly of a conscientious zeal; she has done so much to forward the fortunes of her husband, and to promote his rise from among the inferior clergy to a spiritual lordship, that she cannot help arrogating power and attributing merit to herself in the management of his affairs. She has her strong likes and dislikes, and with other women she has her spites and jealousies; she wishes sometimes to put these women under her feet, and to trample on them after she has got them there. But though she makes her husband so unhappy and ashamed she does not mean to do so, or rather, she would not do so if she could have her way without doing so. The great thing, however, is to have her way, and whatever hinders her having it is for that sufficient reason wrong and wicked. The bishop himself, poor little, weak, yielding man, is wrong, and at least wickedly led when he opposes her, and in her great struggle with his clergy in the case of Josiah Crawley,

the perpetual curate of Hogglestock, she brings the bishop to open shame, and through his shame to open rebellion. His rebellion takes the form of answering to all she says, "You have broken my heart," and so sending her from him by mere refusal to be actively engaged in controversy, or even to be actively scolded. In this exile she suddenly dies. But I, for one, cannot rejoice in Mrs. Proudie's untimely taking off, for when you have her at second hand a scold is purely amusing. Besides this, there is a pathos in her death which throws all her character into a softened relief. She dies partly because she does not know what else to do. She has finally and utterly failed, with the man she has always loved, in the method she has always successfully used with him, and she waits, bewildered and anguished, for some break of his intangibility in which she can take hold of him again in the old way. While she waits her spiritual pang translates itself into a physical pang, and she dies of heart-disease. She is no longer needed; she cumbers the man whom she has so valiantly championed even against his own comfort and quiet; she will be missed for a while, but she will not be truly lamented; she will be a mischief taken out of the world. I call this all very touching, and it reflects a light upon her whole story which keeps me from seeing her altogether hateful and harmful.

## II

The moral and ecclesiastical struggle in which Mrs. Proudie closes with Josiah Crawley is the beginning of the end with her, as the reader will find somewhat overduly recorded in "The Last Chronicle of Barset." That is a book largely imagined and in places amply realized, which as a whole fails as distinctly of being a master-

piece as any great novel I know of. Trollope's second-hand vice of twaddling Thackeraywise over his characters and situations comes to the worst in it, where the fag-ends of the Barchester series are gathered together in a loose and feeble intrigue. The tremendous conception of Crawley's tragedy is suffered to become part and parcel of the prevailing weakness through the author's willingness to eke out the interest by delaying the dénouement so long; but if that tragedy alone could have been openly treated and Crawley studied solely in his relation to the other human particles it magnetically attracted, the book would have been one of the great fictions of the world. As it is, second-rate and third-rate though it is, still it has the fascination which that pure, sad, half-mad soul never fails to exercise whenever he appears on the scene. With the dreadful accusation of theft which he falls under, after passing a check which he seems to have come by unlawfully, but which he cannot remember how he came by, he alone gives the story cohesion and unity; and it is his sorrow and his shame which bring Mrs. Proudie in enmity upon him.

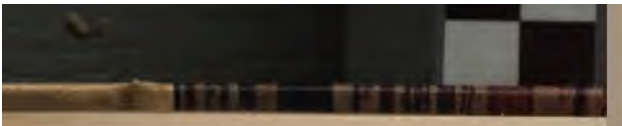
When the magistrates, his old friends and fellow-clergymen, are constrained to commit him upon the charge to which he has laid himself open, Mrs. Proudie decides that it is high time the bishop should take some action concerning him; and she requires the poor bishop to summon him to the palace and make him show cause why he should not be suspended from his perpetual curacy at Hogglestock until a jury of his countrymen shall have acquitted him of the charge. Then Crawley, being too poor to pay for a carriage, walks the long road from Hogglestock to Barchester in the cold and wet, and presents himself to his spiritual superior. But the superior of his spiritual superior is there also to receive the threadbare, muddy, majestic man, and the

scene that follows is the representation of her determination to force herself into an affair which is none of hers, and his determination to keep her out of it.

"'You are very punctual, Mr. Crawley,' said the bishop. Mr. Crawley simply bowed his head, still keeping his hands beneath his cloak. 'Will you not take a chair nearer to the fire?' Mr. Crawley had not seated himself, but had placed himself in front of a chair at the extreme end of the room,—resolved that he would not use it unless he were duly asked. 'Thank you, my lord,' he said, 'I am warm with walking, and, if you please, will avoid the fire.' . . . Hitherto Mrs. Proudie had not said a word. She stood back in the room, near the fire,—more backward a good deal than she was accustomed to do when clergymen made their ordinary visits. On such occasions she would come forward and shake hands with them graciously,—graciously even, if proudly; but she had felt that she must do nothing of that kind now; there must be no shaking hands with a man who had stolen a check for twenty pounds! . . . 'I hope your wife and children are well, Mr. Crawley. . . . I have felt for Mrs. Crawley very deeply,' said Mrs. Proudie. Mr. Crawley had made up his mind that as long as it was possible he would ignore the presence of Mrs. Proudie altogether; and, therefore, he made no sign that he had heard the latter remark. 'It has been most unfortunate,' continued the bishop. . . . 'Far be it from me to express an opinion upon the matter, which will have to come before a jury of your countrymen. It is enough for me to know that the magistrates assembled at Silverbridge, gentlemen to whom no doubt you must be known, as most of them live in your neighborhood, have heard evidence upon the subject—' 'Most convincing evidence,' said Mrs. Proudie, interrupting her husband. Mr. Crawley's black brow became a little

blacker as he heard the word, but still he ignored the woman. He not only did not speak, but did not turn his eye upon her. . . . 'You would have been put in prison, Mr. Crawley, because the magistrates were of opinion that you had taken Mr. Soames's check,' said Mrs. Proudie. On this occasion he did look at her. He turned one glance upon her from under his eyebrows, but he did not speak. 'With all that I have nothing to do,' said the bishop. 'Nothing whatever, my lord,' said Mr. Crawley. 'But, bishop, I think that you have,' said Mrs. Proudie. 'The judgment formed by the magistrates as to the conduct of one of your clergymen makes it imperative upon you to act in the matter.' 'Yes, my dear, yes; I am coming to that. What Mrs. Proudie says is perfectly true. . . . It is undoubtedly the fact that you must at the next assizes surrender yourself at the court-house yonder, to be tried for this offence against the laws.' 'That is true. If I be alive, my lord, and have strength sufficient, I shall be there.' 'You must be there,' said Mrs. Proudie. 'The police will look to that, Mr. Crawley.' She was becoming very angry in that the man would not answer her a word. On this occasion again he did not even look at her. . . . 'Under these circumstances,' continued the bishop, 'looking to the welfare of your parish, to the welfare of the diocese, and allow me to say, Mr. Crawley, to the welfare of yourself also—' 'And especially to the souls of the people,' said Mrs. Proudie. . . . The bishop paused, and Mr. Crawley bowed his head. 'I, therefore, sent over to you a gentleman with whom I am well acquainted, Mr. Thumble, with a letter from myself, in which I endeavored to impress upon you, without the use of any severe language, what my convictions were. . . . Mr. Thumble brought me back your written reply,' continued the bishop, 'by which I was grieved to find that you were

"'THIS WILL NOT DO AT ALL,' SHE SAID"





not willing to submit yourself to my counsel in the matter.' 'I was most unwilling, my lord. Submission to authority is at times a duty;—and at times opposition to authority is a duty also. . . . Opposition to usurped authority is an imperative duty,' said Mr. Crawley. 'And who is to be the judge?' demanded Mrs. Proudie. Then there was silence for a while; when, as Mr. Crawley made no reply, the lady repeated her question. 'Will you be pleased to answer my question, sir? Who, in such a case, is to be the judge?' But Mr. Crawley did not please to answer her question. 'The man is obstinate,' said Mrs. Proudie. . . . 'I forget where I was,' said the bishop. 'Oh! Mr. Thumble came back, and I received your letter;—of course I received it. And I was surprised to learn from that, that in spite of what had occurred at Silverbridge, you were still anxious to continue the usual Sunday ministrations in your church.' . . . 'Had I been Mr. Thumble,' said Mrs. Proudie, 'I would have read from that desk and I would have preached from that pulpit.' Mr. Crawley waited a moment, thinking that the bishop might perhaps speak again; but as he did not, but sat expectant as though he had finished his discourse, and now expected a reply, Mr. Crawley got up from his seat and drew near to the table. 'My lord,' he began, 'it has all been just as you have said. The circumstances are strong against me; and, though your lordship has altogether misunderstood the nature of the duty performed by the magistrates in sending my case for trial,—although, as it seems to me, you have come to conclusions in this matter in ignorance of the very theory of our laws,—' 'Sir!' said Mrs. Proudie. 'Yet I can foresee the probability that a jury may discover me to have been guilty of theft.' 'Of course the jury will do so,' said Mrs. Proudie. . . . 'But till that time shall come, my lord, I shall hold my own at Hoggle-

stock as you hold your own here at Barchester.' . . . 'You defy us, then?' said Mrs. Proudie. 'My lord, I grant your authority as bishop to be great, but even a bishop can only act as the law allows him.' 'God forbid that I should do more,' said the bishop. 'Sir, you will find that your wicked threats will fall back upon your own head,' said Mrs. Proudie. 'Peace, woman,' Mr. Crawley said, addressing her at last. The bishop jumped out of his chair at hearing the wife of his bosom called a woman. But he jumped rather in admiration than in anger. He had already begun to perceive that Mr. Crawley was a man who had better be left to take care of the souls at Hogglestock, at any rate till the trial should come on. 'Woman!' said Mrs. Proudie, rising to her feet as though she really intended some personal encounter. 'Madam,' said Mr. Crawley, 'you should not interfere in these matters. You simply debase your husband's high office. The distaff were more fitting for you. My lord, good-morning.' And before either of them could speak again, he was out of the room, and through the hall, and beyond the gate, and standing beneath the towers of the cathedral."

## III

After all, I find that it is rather the character of Josiah Crawley than of Mrs. Proudie which is developed in the foregoing scene. In another scene she suffers a like defeat at the hands of the topping Dr. Tempest, one of the chief clergy at Barchester, whom she attempts to instruct in his duty respecting Mr. Crawley. He, too, ignores her presence, and if he does so with less majestic dignity than Crawley, he brings the bishop a yet keener sense of his degradation through his wife. "The bishop did not again speak a word of kindness to her,

and he tried not to speak to her at all. 'You have broken my heart,' he said again and again. Her own efforts to bring him back to something like life, to some activity of mind if not of body, were made constantly; and when she failed, as she did fail day after day, she would go slowly to her own room, and lock her door, and look back in her solitude at all the days of her life. She had agonies in these minutes of which no one near her knew anything. She would seize with her arm the part of the bed near which she would stand, and hold by it, grasping it, as though she were afraid to fall; and then, when it was at the worst with her, she would go to her closet,—a closet that no eyes ever saw unlocked but her own,—and fill for herself and swallow some draught; and then she would sit down with the Bible before her, and read it sedulously. She spent hours every day with her Bible before her, repeating to herself whole chapters, which she almost knew by heart. It cannot be said that she was a bad woman, though she had in her time done an indescribable amount of evil. She still longed to rule the diocese by means of her husband,—but was made to pause and hesitate by the unwonted mood that had fallen upon him."

When Crawley at last wrote resigning his perpetual curacy, she determined to rouse the bishop to action. But when she went to speak with him, he would not look at her.

"'Why do you not turn round and speak to me properly?' she said. 'I do not want to speak to you at all,' the bishop answered. This was very bad;—almost anything would be better than this. He was sitting now over the fire, with his elbows on his knees, and his face buried in his hands. She had gone round the room so as to face him, and was now standing almost over him, but still she could not see his countenance. 'This will not do at all,' she said. 'My dear, do you

know that you are forgetting yourself altogether?' 'I wish I could forget myself.' . . . And now he got up and looked at her. For a moment he stood upon his legs, and then again he sat down with his face turned towards her. 'It is the truth. You have brought on me such disgrace that I cannot hold up my head. You have ruined me. I wish I were dead; and it is all through you that I am driven to wish it.' Of all that she had suffered in her life this was the worst. She clasped both her hands to her side as she listened to him, and for a minute or two she made no reply. . . . 'Bishop,' she said, 'the words that you speak are sinful, very sinful.' 'You have made them sinful,' he replied. 'I will not hear that from you. I will not indeed. I have endeavored to do my duty by you, and I do not deserve it. . . . All I want of you is that you should arouse yourself, and go to your work.' 'I could do my work very well,' he said, 'if you were not here.' 'I suppose, then, you wish I were dead?' said Mrs. Proudie. To this he made no reply, nor did he stir himself. How could flesh and blood bear this,—female flesh and blood, —Mrs. Proudie's flesh and blood? Now, at last, her temper once more got the better of her judgment, probably much to her immediate satisfaction, and she spoke out. 'I tell you what it is, my lord; if you are imbecile, I must be active. It is very sad that I should have to assume your authority—' 'I will not allow you to assume my authority.' . . . 'What do you mean to say to Mr. Thumble when you see him?' 'That is nothing to you.' She came up to him and put her hand upon his shoulder, and spoke to him very gently. 'Tom,' she said, 'is that the way in which you speak to your wife?' 'Yes, it is. You have driven me to it. Why have you taken upon yourself to send that man to Hogglestock?' 'Because it was right to do so. I came to you for instructions, and you would give none.' 'I

should have given what instructions I pleased in proper time. Thumble shall not go to Hogglestock next Sunday.' 'Who shall go, then?' 'Never mind. Nobody. It does not matter to you. If you will leave me now I shall be obliged to you. There will be an end of all this very soon,—very soon.' Mrs. Proudie after this stood for a while thinking what she would say; but she left the room without uttering another word. As she looked at him a hundred different thoughts came into her mind. She had loved him dearly, and she loved him still; but she knew now,—at this moment felt absolutely sure,—that by him she was hated! In spite of all her roughness and temper, Mrs. Proudie was in this like other women,—that she would fain have been loved had it been possible. She had always meant to serve him. She was conscious of that; conscious also in a way that, although she had been industrious, although she had been faithful, although she was clever, yet she had failed. At the bottom of her heart she knew that she had been a bad wife. And yet she had meant to be a pattern wife! . . . She was preparing to go up to her chamber, with her hand on the banisters and with her foot on the stairs, when she saw the servant who had answered the bishop's bell. 'John,' she said, 'when Mr. Thumble comes to the palace, let me see him before he goes to my lord.' Then Mrs. Proudie went up stairs to her chamber, and locked her door. Mr. Thumble returned to Barchester that day, leading the broken-down cob, and a dreadful walk he had. . . . John was peremptory with him, insisting that he must wait first upon Mrs. Proudie and then upon the bishop. Mr. Thumble might perhaps have turned a deaf ear to the latter command, but the former was one which he felt himself bound to obey. So he entered the palace, rather cross, very much soiled as to his outer man; and in this condition went up a

certain small staircase which was familiar to him, to a small parlor which adjoined Mrs. Proudie's room, and there awaited the arrival of the lady. . . . Mrs. Proudie's own maid, Mrs. Draper by name, came to him and said that she had knocked twice at Mrs. Proudie's door and would knock again. Two minutes after that she returned, running into the room with her arms extended, and exclaiming, 'Oh, heavens, sir;—mistress is dead!' Mr. Thumble, hardly knowing what he was about, followed the woman into the bed-room, and there he found himself standing awestruck before the corpse of her who had so lately been the presiding spirit of the palace. The body was still resting on its legs, leaning against the end of the side of the bed, while one of the arms was clasped around the bed-post. The mouth was rigidly closed, but the eyes were open as though staring at him. Nevertheless there could be no doubt from the first glance that the woman was dead. He went up close to it, but did not dare to touch it. There was no one as yet there but he and Mrs. Draper;—no one else knew what had happened."

## IV

The type of mere termagant is not hard to catch; but the woman who is conscientious as well as arrogant, who means well to those she most wrongs and outrages, is one of those mixed characters far more difficult to achieve, and it is such a woman who constitutes the author's triumph in Mrs. Proudie. One cannot say she is his greatest triumph; a cloud of witnesses would rise in protest if one said that. There would be Lady Glencora Pallisser, Lady Laura Kennedy, Mrs. Phineas Finn, Madalina Demolines, Miss Dunstable, and the various heroines of "Orley Farm," "The Bertrams,"

"Can You Forgive Her?" "Is He Popenjoy?" "He Knew He Was Right," and many others to gainsay so bold a claim. Yet, in spite of them is not Mrs. Proudie, after Lily Dale, the woman character who remains most distinct in the memories of Trollope's readers?

I have been wondering all through my writing of him, whether the readers of Trollope are of that commanding class which they once were, and sadly doubting. Once, there is no question but he had the largest number of authoritative readers, but for how long a time, or just when, it would not be easy to say. I suspect his supremacy was brief, and that it could be ascertained only for that bright moment when Thackeray was editing the "Cornhill Magazine," and Trollope was writing its serial. But his popularity extended all through the eighteen-sixties, and well into the seventies, from the time fixed by his "Cornhill" story; I forget which of his stories it was. Thackeray had then done all his great novels, and though Dickens had still several of his prodigious fantasies before him, it is doubtful if he was to deepen or even widen the impression he had already made. Charles Reade was synchronously coruscating in his most brilliant pin-wheeling and sky-rocketing, but like Dickens he was confirming rather than forming his public. George Eliot's greatest work came a little later, and in "Middlemarch" she pushed Trollope from the throne, which she then held until her declining powers made the accession of Mr. Thomas Hardy easy for his unquestionable mastery.

But during the period covered by our civil war, say, from 1861 till 1865, Trollope reigned; and no one, I think, can say that he was unworthy to reign. Each of the great contemporary English novelists represented an English world, and Thackeray's English world did not differ more from Dickens's than from Reade's or George Eliot's. But Trollope, without seeking sub-

jects for ironical satire, or surprising transformation, or dazzling discovery, or morbid analysis, represented the English world as it appeared to him in its normal moods of high-and-low mindedness; vicious, virtuous; dull, amusing, respectable and disreputable; wise and foolish; but in all its varieties entirely and for the most part unconsciously English. One need not recur to Carlyle's saying that Trollope could never lack for characters, so long as there were thirty millions of people in Great Britain, mostly bores; for that is as false and wrong-headed as nearly all Carlyle's *ad captandum* criticism: and Hawthorne's saying that a novel of Trollope's was like a piece of earth under the microscope, with all the life active upon it, imparts an erring sense of dimensions. If a telescope of prodigious power could be trained from somewhere in space upon the British Isles, so that their people could be seen life-size, that would offer some such effect as we get in Trollope's fiction. He had not enough, or he had too much, imagination to conceive of representing his fellow-subjects in the mid-years of the Victorian reign, other than as he knew them, and he neither extenuated nor aught set down in malice concerning them.

If this is true of the men, it is still truer of the women. At a time when Thackeray was caricaturing or sentimentalizing them, when Dickens was translating them into pretty or hideous monsters, when Reade was portraying them as impassioned or perfidious pusses, and when George Eliot was idealizing them in her Romolas or persecuting them in her Gwendolens and Rosamonds, Trollope was doing his period the incalculable service of anticipating instantaneous photography in his likenesses of Victorian maids, wives, and widows in endless variety. His work is all so true and artistic that one cannot trace in it the presence of any favorite type of woman. The women are such women as each scheme

necessarily involves: good, bad, and indifferent; fair, plain, and middling; wise and foolish; high and low; the camera treats them all alike fairly; and the spectator is the richer by its impartiality.

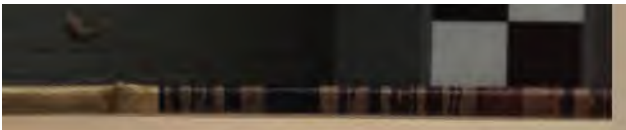
Upon the whole I should be inclined to place Trollope among the very first of those supreme novelists to whom the ever-womanly has revealed itself. He has not shown the subtlest sense of womanhood; his portraits do not impart the last, the most exquisite joy; it is not the very soul of the sex that shows itself in them; but it is the mind, the heart, the conscience, the manner; and this is for one painter enough. Let Jane Austen catch their ultimate charm, and George Eliot their ultimate truth, and Hawthorne their farthermost meanings and intimations; Trollope has shown them as we mostly see them when we meet them in society and as we know them at home; and if it were any longer his to choose, he might well rest content with his work. For my part I wish I might send my readers to the long line of his wise, just, sane novels, which I have been visiting anew for the purposes of these papers, and finding as delightful as ever, and, thanks to extraordinary gifts for forgetting, almost as fresh as ever.

## THE HEROINE OF "THE INITIALS"

SOME time about the middle of the century which has so lately become the last, there appeared a novel which swept the younger novel-reading world almost with the thoroughness of "Jane Eyre" among maturer readers. Those who were once of that younger world still think "The Initials" one of the most captivating love stories ever written; and they feel something of the old pride in it which they felt when it was a mark of taste and refinement to like it.

Not to have read "The Initials" was in their day to have left one's self out of the range of intellectual conversation and almost of human sympathy. Such a one was not authorized even to speculate about the authorship which, then unknown, added the excitement of mystery to the intrinsic charm of the book. Later it came out that "The Initials" was written by the Baroness Tautphoeus, an Englishwoman married and living in Bavaria, but "Quits," at least, "by the author of 'The Initials,'" reached them before her identity penetrated to her worshippers.

Neither "Quits," however, nor "Cyrilla" nor "At Odds," ever had half the acceptance of "The Initials," and in fact they had none of the rounded completeness, the entire and perfect fascination of the first story. It remained her best, as it remains one of the best novels written in the century when fiction





won the primacy in polite literature which it seems destined to keep.

## I

"The Initials" is first of all a love story, and then it is an international love story, and perhaps the earliest of the modern sort, which Americans rather than the English have cultivated. It relates to the loves of a young Englishman and a young German girl, in whose family he becomes an inmate at Munich. Her father is of "civil condition," but has married a second wife socially beneath him, and in their rather less than moderate fortunes the Rosenbergs are more than willing to take a lodger. The mother is of good soul if not of good family, and like most women of her nation a devoted housekeeper; the family consists of her young sons, and of her step-daughters, Hildegarde and Crescenz, who are hardly of the age to be heroines in England, but at sixteen and fifteen are quite old enough to be thought of in marriage in Germany. I should be ashamed to give these details to people of my own generation, for everybody who was anybody knew them forty or fifty years ago; but I now address them to the later youth, and I feel myself safe if I have not got them quite straight. I believe Herr Rosenberg had married above him when he espoused the mother of his daughters, who, I remember, had some noble cousins bothering about, and complicating matters. But I do not care; the main fact is that the young Englishman, Hamilton, comes to live with the Rosenbergs for the improvement of his German, and that Crescenz falls in love with him, and he falls in love with Hildegarde.

Hildegarde is one of the first proud and angry heroines who since, rather than before, have flourished a good deal in fiction, and she is frankly beautiful, the

concession to human weakness being made in the matter of temper. It will be noted that she is therefore of a type at once earlier than the plain, impassioned heroines of Charlotte Brontë and later; and is of that pretty but tempestuous sort of girls whom Emily Brontë brought in the fashion of, and who antedated and outlived their cousins. She contributed a spice of variety to the family of English heroines by her strangeness, for though of English origin through the author who imagined her, she was of such foreign make and manner as at once to catch the eye among them. She was shown, too, in her native environment, and for the first time we had in her affair with Hamilton that piquancy of internationality which the American novelists, oftener than the English, have since invoked. Before her there had been such heavy affairs as that of Sir Charles Grandison and the lovely Italian Lady Clementina; but in "The Initials" the situation had almost the modernity of a case fancied by Mr. Henry James, the greatest of all the masters in that way.

Neither Hamilton at nineteen, nor Hildegarde at sixteen could be of such confirmed and hardened prejudices in favor of their own nation as to make their national difference an obstacle to their passion. The barriers this had to surmount were social and personal, for the well-born Englishman could not help feeling and showing himself superior to the bourgeois family which had received him, and such a girl as Hildegarde could not help promptly hating him for it. They met almost as enemies, and their wooing throughout had often the alarming effect of warring; at the very end, her capture is something like a hostile triumph. The affair is not the less intoxicating to the spectator; the country fought over, though difficult, is picturesque, and the manners and customs of the neutrals as well as the

belligerents, are realized as vital elements of the exciting spectacle.

## II

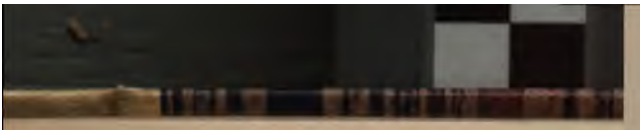
In her first presentation Hildegarde is grouped with her sister, and they are both described as "perfect personifications of German beauty—blue eyes, blooming cheeks, red lips, and a profusion of brown hair, most classically braided and plaited. . . . They were both tall and very slightly formed, and their dark cotton dresses were made and put on with an exactness which proved that they were not indifferent to the advantages bestowed on them by nature." At the table d'hôte where he meets them, "the young ladies, to Hamilton's infinite astonishment, took the chicken bones in their fingers, and detached the meat from them with their teeth. He felt at once convinced that they were immeasurably vulgar . . . not aware that the mode of eating is in Germany no such exact criterion of manners as in England."

It is the good, sweet, stupid Crescenz that Hamilton first becomes acquainted with, and who in her tenderness for him confesses her wretchedness at being obliged to marry the kindly but elderly and bald-headed Major Stultz. "'Why . . . before I left Seon, he seemed much more inclined to marry your sister than you.' 'Oh, of course, he would rather have married Hildegarde, because she is so much handsomer and cleverer than I am; but she would not listen to him, and called him an old fool.' 'I admire her candor,' said Hamilton. 'And then she got into a passion when he persevered; and slapped him on the mouth! . . . Yes, when he attempted to kiss her hand; at least he says so; and Hildegarde thinks it may be true, as she was angry, and struggled very hard to release her hand!'

. . . 'She seems of rather a passionate temperament.' 'Passionate! Yes, she sometimes gets into a passion, but it is soon over, and then she can be so kind to those she loves! . . . With me she is never in a passion!'"

In due time Hamilton himself experiences her temper, notably, once, just after he has been waltzing with Crescenz, and holding her rather closely embraced. "'Your sister's personal dislike seems to influence her conduct on all occasions,' said Hamilton, glancing towards Hildegarde. . . . Hildegarde rose; as she passed Hamilton she said, in a low voice, 'For personal dislike you may say detestation, when you refer to yourself in future.' 'Most willingly, most gladly,' said Hamilton, laughing. 'I wish you to hate me with all your heart.' 'Then your wish is gratified. I feel the greatest contempt—' 'Halt!' cried Hamilton, laughing, for her anger amused him. 'I did not give you leave to feel contempt; I only said you might hate.'"

One day Madame Rosenberg bids the girl carry Hamilton his coffee to him in his room. "'But—but—' hesitated Hildegarde, 'Mr. Hamilton is not alone!' 'Count Zedwitz is in his room, but he won't bite you; so go at once.' . . . Half an hour later Hamilton was out in the corridor. Madame Rosenberg . . . hoped his coffee was not too cold. 'Coffee? No—yes! When, where did I drink it?' 'In your own room,' replied Madame Rosenberg, laughing. . . . 'I sent it to you by Hildegarde.' He looked inquiringly at Hildegarde; she raised her eyes slowly from her work, and looking at him steadily and gravely, said, in French, 'I threw it out of the window rather than take it to you.' 'Next time, I advise you to drink it,' said Hamilton, laughing."





Hildegarde's anger towards Hamilton is kindled not only from her unconscious love of him, but from her more generous indignation of what she believes his trifling with poor, pretty Crescenz. At last she can bear it no longer, and she brings him to book for it, and there is a fine scene between them, which the lovers of the lovers will not have forgotten. She reproaches him, and then implores him to leave their house. He temporizes, and teases her till it comes to her saying, "'Ungenerous, unfeeling Englishman! . . . I—I see you are trying to put me into a passion—but I am not angry,' she said, seating herself in the chair he had before placed for her. 'You said you were able to convince me—' '*You* have convinced *me* that you are a consummate actress,' cried Hamilton, contemptuously. 'I am no actress!' she exclaimed, starting from her chair with such a violence that it fell to the ground with a loud crash. . . . 'You are even more thoroughly selfish than I imagined. This is the last time I shall ever speak to you.' 'Don't make rash vows,' said Hamilton, coolly. 'I dare say you will often speak to me in time—perhaps condescend to like me.' 'Never! I do not think there exists in the world a more unamiable being than you are! . . . You are vindictive, too, cruelly vindictive. It is because you dislike me, it is in order to make me unhappy that you trifle with my sister's feelings. . . . No matter; I see now that these conferences and quarrels are worse than useless, and—' 'I quite agree with you,' said Hamilton, quickly. . . . 'Suppose I promise never by word or deed to disparage Major Stultz in future, and totally to abstain from all further attentions to your sister?' 'That—is—better—than—nothing,' said Hildegarde, slowly. 'If you promise,'

she added, hesitatingly, 'I — I think I may trust you.'"

## III

It cannot go so far as this without going farther both in warring and wooing, with two young people brought together under the same roof, and meeting daily, almost hourly, almost momently. The love-making and the hate-making between Hildegarde and Hamilton advance equally, and it is only a question of time when the hate-making shall be altogether lost in the love-making.

She has to bear a great deal, poor, proud girl, but she proves strong enough for her burden, even to accepting in Hamilton's presence her step-mother's rebuke of her pride, and her advice to forget that the Countess Raimund was her mother. She suffers, but she takes it all in good part; and in fact she is a good girl, for all her temper and hauteur, doing her part in the family and the housekeeping, and not forgetting that she is a daughter to her father as well as her mother, and has duties to her step-brothers as well as her sister.

From her mother's family she has only trouble, and there is one worthless cousin whose unworthy and irreverent love pursues her and persecutes her, and all but effects her separation from Hamilton, who is himself not too considerate of her helplessness. In fact, the Englishman's best excuse, in certain crises of conduct, is the sincerity of his passion, and not his unselfishness, as will appear to the reader who first acquaints himself with that famous chapter of their lives called "The Struggle." It is perhaps the climax of the story, and it shows Hildegarde in her limitations as well as her potentialities with respect to both Hamilton and Oscar Raimund; certainly the scene of her warring

and wooing with Hamilton is a *résumé* of all in that kind which characterizes the book, and is one of high novelty and originality as such scenes go. The family have apparently all gone out when Hamilton returns from a Sunday morning ride, after having the night before had an uncommonly amicable talk with Hildegarde, and prevailed with her, as he thought, not to read a certain unfit book, but read only those he had given her a list of.

"He entered the house by the back staircase, visited all the rooms and even the kitchen, but found all deserted. Madame Rosenberg's room was also unoccupied, but through the partly open door of it he saw Hildegarde sitting on the sofa in the drawing-room, reading so intently that she was perfectly unconscious of his presence. The deep folds of her dark blue merino dress, with its closely fitting body, gave a more than usual elegance to her tall, slight figure as she bent in profile over her book, and Hamilton stood in silent admiration, unconsciously twisting his riding-whip round his wrist, until his eyes rested for the second time on the book which she held in her hand. He started, hesitated, then hastily strode forward and stood before her; doubt and uncertainty were still depicted on his countenance as Hildegarde looked up, but her dismay, her deep blush, and the childish action of placing the hand containing the volume behind her, were a confirmation of his fears that she was reading the forbidden work. 'Excuse me for interrupting you,' he said, with a forced smile, 'but I really cannot believe the evidence of my own eyes, and must request you to let me look at that book for a moment.' 'No, you shall not,' she answered, leaning back on the sofa, and becoming very pale while she added, 'It is very disagreeable being startled and interrupted in this manner. I thought you told mamma you would meet

her at Neuberghausen.' 'Very true; perhaps I may meet her there; but, before I go, I must and will see that book. On it depends my future opinion of you.' 'You shall not see it,' cried Hildegarde, the color again returning to her face. 'The book,' said Hamilton, seizing firmly her disengaged hand. 'The book, or the name of it!' 'Neither; let me go!' cried Hildegarde, struggling to disengage her hand. Like most usually quiet-tempered persons, Hamilton, when once actually aroused, lost all command of himself: he held one of her hands as in a vise, and, when she brought forward the other to accelerate its release, he bent down to read the title of the book, which was immediately thrown on the ground, and the then free hand descended with such violence on his cheek and ear that for a moment he was perfectly stunned; and, even after he stood upright, he looked at her for a few seconds in unfeigned astonishment. 'Do you think,' at length he exclaimed, vehemently—'do you think that I will allow you to treat me as you did Major Stultz with impunity?' And then, catching her in his arms, he kissed her repeatedly and with a violence which seemed to terrify her beyond measure. 'I gave you fair warning more than once,' he added, when at length he had released her. 'I gave you fair warning, and you knew what you had to expect.' She covered her face with her hands, and burst into a passion of tears. 'I cannot imagine,' he continued, impetuously walking up and down the room—'I cannot imagine why you did not, with your usual courage, tell me at once the name of the book and prevent this scene.' Hildegarde shook her head, and wept still more bitterly. 'After all,' he said, seating himself with affected calmness opposite to her, leaning his arms on the table, and drumming upon the book, which now lay undisputed between them—'after all, you are not better than other people! Not more to be

"'LET ME LOOK AT THAT BOOK FOR A MOMENT'"

trusted than other girls, and I fancied you such perfection! I could have forgiven anything but the—the untruth!' he exclaimed, starting up. 'Anything but that! Pshaw! yesterday, when you told me that the books had been sent back to the library, I believed you without a moment's hesitation. I thanked you for your deference to my opinion—ha, ha, ha! What a fool you must have thought me!' Hildegarde looked up. All expression of humility had left her features, her tears ceased to flow, and, as she rose to leave the room, she turned almost haughtily towards him, while saying: 'I really do not know what right you have to speak to me in this manner. I consider it very great presumption on your part, and desire it may never occur again.' 'You may be quite sure I shall never offend you in this way again,' he said, holding the book towards her. 'What a mere farce the writing of that list of books was!' 'No, for I had intended to have read all you recommended.' 'And all I recommended you to avoid, too! This—this, which you tacitly promised not to finish—' He stopped; for, while she took the book in silence, she blushed so deeply, and seemed so embarrassed, that he added, sorrowfully: 'Oh, how I regret having come home! How I wish I had not discovered that you could deceive me!' 'I have *not* deceived you,' said Hildegarde. . . . 'Appearances are against me, and yet I repeat I have not deceived you. The books *were* sent to the library yesterday evening—but too late to be changed. Old Hans brought them back again, and I found them in my room when I went to bed. I did not read them last night.' 'But you staid at home for the purpose to-day,' observed Hamilton, reproachfully. 'No; my mother gave the servants leave to go out for the whole day, and, as she did not like to leave the house quite unoccupied, she asked me to remain at home. I, of course, agreed to

do so; without, I assure you, thinking of those hateful books. I do not mean to—I cannot justify what I have done. I can only say in extenuation that the temptation was great. I have been alone for more than two hours—my father's books are locked up. I never enter your room when you are absent, and I wished to know the end of the story, which still interests and haunts me in spite of all my endeavors to forget it. The book lay before me; I resisted long, but at last I opened it; and so—and so—' 'And so, I suppose, I must acknowledge that I have judged you too harshly,' said Hamilton. 'I do not care about your judgment. I have fallen in my own esteem since I find that I cannot resist temptation.' 'And is my good opinion of no value to you?' 'It was, perhaps; but it has lost all worth within the last half-hour.' 'How do you mean?' 'I have seen you in the course of that time suspicious, rough, and what you would yourself call ungentlemanlike. . . . You were the last person from whom I should have expected such treatment,' continued Hildegarde, while the tears started to her eyes and her voice faltered, 'the very last; and though I did get into a passion and give you a blow, it was not until you had hurt my wrist and provoked me beyond endurance.' She left the room, and walked quickly down the passage. 'Stay,' cried Hamilton, following her—'stay, and hear my excuses.' 'Excuses! You have not even one to offer,' said Hildegarde, laying her hand on the lock of her door. 'Hear me at least,' he said, eagerly. 'I could not endure the thought of your being one jot less perfect than I had imagined you—that made me suspicious; the wish for proof made me rough; and though I cannot exactly justify my subsequent conduct, I plead in extenuation your own words, "The temptation was great."' Hildegarde's dimples showed that a smile was with difficulty re-

pressed, and Hamilton, taking courage, whispered hurriedly: 'But one word more—hear my last and best excuse; it is that I love you, deeply, passionately; but I need not tell you this, for you must have known it long, long ago. Hildegarde, say only that our perpetual quarrels have not made you absolutely hate me!' Hildegarde, without uttering a word more, impetuously drew back her hand, sprang into her room, and locked the door. He waited for a minute or two, and then knocked, but received no answer. 'Hildegarde,' he cried, reproachfully, 'is this right—is this kind? Even if you dislike me, I have a right to expect an answer.' 'Go,' she said, in a very low voice; 'go away. You ought not to be here when I am alone.' 'Why did you not think of that before?' 'I don't know. I had not time. I—' 'Nonsense. Open the door, and let me speak to you for a moment.' No answer, but he thought he heard her walking up and down the room. 'Only one moment,' he repeated. 'I cannot, indeed, I cannot. Pray go away.'"

## IV

The youthfulness of all this is lovely. These people are really at the beginning of life and are immersed in the intoxicating employ of finding themselves out while remaining ignorant of their power upon each other. Neither is an actor; the fascination of both is in their entire sincerity. A worse than either would not have done what they each did; they are still almost children.

I think it is plain that the author learned part of her trade from those weird sisters who wrote "Jane Eyre" and "Wuthering Heights." Her art is a blend of Charlotte Brontë's and Emily Brontë's, with a greater

tendency to the greater freedom of Emily's, and an effect, in the composite result, of a fresh originality. But in her stormiest scenes you have not the sense of outlawry such as you have in those of "Wuthering Heights," and the casing air is charged with comedy, not tragedy. Oddly enough, these æsthetics do not discord with the metaphysics which the author has learned to indulge from the fiction of Goethe. There are passages in this story of young love which in their psychological, economical, sociological excursiveness might have been studied from "Wilhelm Meister." The author was in fact operating in a region then so new to the novelist that she had a fair right to divide with the reader the weight of the exegetic duty laid upon her. She had invited him into a world so strange to the English-speaking reader that she must sometimes suspend the lighter pleasures of hospitality in making sure that he understands what is going on. The world is since so much more thoroughly travelled, and thanks to such fiction as hers, the peoples are so much more intimately versed in each other's peculiarities that the task of the international novelist is now indefinitely lightened.

But fortunately, however well we knew Germany, or Italy, or Spain, or Russia, the *Pays du Tendre* always remains strange to us, and the highways and byways of the land of love may be mapped out in the closest detail, to the untiring interest of the student. Especially that region of a girl's heart, explored by so many thousands of travellers who have recorded its surprises in so many hundred thousands of books, continues a perennial mystery, a continent proof against all revelations. We get glimpses of it in the story of such a girl as Hildegarde, but only glimpses, and perhaps if she herself opened it to us, we should be none the wiser in it. We cannot be sure that Hamilton will always be happy;

at times he will be tempestuously happy; but at least he will never be calmly unhappy. She will be always a surprise and a puzzle to him, and when she is most his own, his sense of possession will be qualified by this inalienable strangeness in her, which will also be her strangeness to herself. She will never be able to reveal her own nature wholly to him; for she will never wholly know it. For other girls the most obvious, though not by any means the most valuable lesson of her experience will be that it is not safe for a girl to box a young man's ears unless she is willing to marry him. This point seems to be definitely ascertained in "The Initials."

## THE HEROINE OF "KATE BEAUMONT"

IF we put aside the romances of Hawthorne and the romantic novels of Cooper, we can hardly find much fiction of American scope and import before the Civil War, except "Uncle Tom's Cabin." That was a great novel, marred by defects of art, and fettered to a cause, but still a great novel, and really the earliest American novel. After the war we began to have other novels of material proportions, and first among these were the stories of J. W. De Forest, a brevet major of volunteers, and a veteran of the vast army then fading back, with the weather-beaten blue of its overcoats, into the common color of the popular life. His distinction was thereafter civil and literary, and for the purposes of this paper it will be convenient to call him Mr. De Forest, though there is so much in his books to remind the reader of the big war which the author had passed through, with all his artistic senses alert. The book in which I first made his acquaintance, with a surprise and joy in an American who seemed to write novels with authority, was altogether concerned with the war and its results, and "Miss Ravenel's Conversion" was not less valuable to me for the light it cast upon the motives and morals of the recent struggle than for the knowledge of men and women, as such, which it showed. I have not read it since those far-off days, and I have not recurred to his subsequent novels, "Playing the Mischief," "The Wetherill Affair," "Overland," and "Irene the Missionary," which I have hardly named in the

order of their succession; but I have read "Honest John Vane" more than once, with a feeling of its mastery in handling the flabby material of our ordinary political virtue, such as no other American novel has given me. A certain impatience, a certain contempt of his material on the moral side, is what as nearly allies Mr. De Forest's art, in spite of his Huguenot race, to the New England ethicism so fatal to fiction, as anything I have noted in him. It forbids him the artist's impartial joy in the good, bad, and indifferent motives which his sole affair is to let show themselves what they are, and it leaves him, if not a partisan of the better, a censor of the worse. A certain scornful bluntness in dealing with the disguises in which women natures reveal themselves is perhaps at the root of that dislike which most women have felt for his fiction, and which in a nation of women readers has prevented it from ever winning a merited popularity.

## I

I suppose his shapeliest novel is "Kate Beaumont," which might better have been called "A Family Feud," so largely is it the history of the hostilities between the Beaumonts and McAlisters in a South Carolina village before the war. Within the framework of this tragedy, which has the comic reliefs visible to so true a humorist as Mr. De Forest, plays the love story of Kate Beaumont and Frank McAlister. They have met on the steamer bringing them home from a long sojourn in Europe, and he has fallen in love with her before she has fallen into the sea and been saved from death by her hereditary enemy. He has the greatest loathing for the hereditary enmity, which he considers a relic of barbarism, and his rescue of Kate Beaumont forms a pretty basis for the reconciliation of their families, when

the young people get home. The reconciliation is always just about to effect itself, but is always turning into provisional hostilities, and it does not actually take place till the close of the book, when the lovers are duly married. I confess that it was not with the expectation of finding Kate Beaumont a heroine to my hand that I turned again to the book; and I there found her what I remembered her, a sweet girl, gentle and generous, with a ready-made passion for her lover, and otherwise a prevailing passivity. It was in her sister Nellie, the wife of the drunken Randolph Armitage, that I looked forward to meeting a second time a personality which greatly pleased me the first. Nellie Armitage is a great little creature, quite true to herself and her circumstance: absolute woman, and yet with rather more humor than is vouchsafed to most of her family. She had married Armitage for love of his beauty, and as his vice grew upon him, the proud girl had lived to suffer from him every ignominy, of which blows were almost the least part. When she ceases to love him she cannot leave him because of the public scandal which a woman of the Beaumont race must not expose herself to; and because she cannot do so without confessing to the other Beaumonts things which will make it their duty and pleasure to kill her husband.

All the men in the book have an extraordinary vitality, and Nellie Beaumont has her full share of it, though the other women are rather scanted in behalf of the men. She is pathetically, heroically, whimsically alive from the first moment, and is never more so than when she falls in love with Frank McAlister for her sister's sake, and putting aside the historic Beaumont hatred, resolves that he shall be Kate's husband. She comes the more naturally to this pass when she at last abandons her own husband, and takes refuge with her father; for by this time life has taught her

"'TO THINK HOW I HAVE LOVED HIM!'"

that the love of a good man is the best thing in the world, and Frank McAlister is good. With the help of the heavenly powers she has fairly got the feud under her feet, when her husband comes to claim her, and in his drunken jealousy of Frank—not on hers but on Kate's account—tries to kill the young fellow whom he finds on a mission of peace in Peyton Beaumont's house. His wild shooting brings down Beaumont's saintly old father-in-law, Colonel Kershaw; Frank's brothers, lurking about, imagine that the Beaumonts have attacked him, and open fire upon the Beaumonts, who come running, pistol in hand; and the old feud flames out again in more infernal fury than ever. But Kershaw's death proves a real peace-offering; Armitage is promptly turned out, and when his initial is found on the fatal bullet, and not the McAlisters', the way is open to the Beaumonts for that forgiveness of their enemies which the old man has urged upon them from his death-bed. The families are reconciled, and Kate and Frank are married.

## II

Now that the prejudices of the war time and the ante-war time have effectively died away, we may rejoice in the virtues which Mr. De Forest shows consistent with so many vices in the Beaumonts. Each of the men of that family is studied with an accuracy which brings him tangibly before us: the father, Peyton Beaumont, a quivering mass of affection for his own flesh and blood, an impersonation of the noblest and stupidest caste and family pride, his hot blood on fire with constant cocktails, and his life always in his hand for the resentment of insult, an impassioned parent and an impenitent homicide; Vincent, the cynical, scientific product of the Paris medical schools, returned to the

full acceptance of the South Carolina conditions; his younger brother Poinsett, bred to the law, but practically no more a lawyer than Vincent is a doctor, serenely philosophical, and amiable from premature fat, but as devoted to the feud as the youngest brother, Tom, with whom it is a religion. The Beaumonts are of Huguenot race, and by so much are more picturesque than the Scotch-blooded McAlisters; but these are scarcely less delicately differentiated, though they are not touched with the same artistic affection. The old Judge McAlister, as canny, suave, and slippery as Peyton Beaumont is dense, frank, and truthful, is an admirable portrait, and so is the kind, consumptive, mechanically homicidal eldest son, Bruce. Frank, emancipated from all local tradition by his seven years' study in Europe, and holding the feud in utter abhorrence, is worthily the lover of Kate Beaumont. But the women of his family are shown in the abeyance of the Southern women in the slave-holding times. It is only some woman liberated by unhappiness to a sort of family leadership who can have the importance of Nellie Beaumont.

But even she, as a character, is less livingly presented than even such a subordinate man as Bentley Armitage. Among the group of powerful men figures, that of the old Colonel Kershaw, who has outlived the sins of his youth and the errors of his civilization, must profoundly interest the student. His patriarchal paramountcy not only with the passionate Beaumont, but all his impassioned descendants is, however, an effect of native goodness which is now become saintly without having degenerated into weakness.

## III

Have I been tacitly owning that even my chosen heroine in "Kate Beaumont" is not of the dominant

quality which the other heroines of this series may justly claim? She is of scarcely more force, indeed, than the heroines of Dickens, though of indefinitely more vitality. It is not Dickens, however, who in any way characterizes Mr. De Forest, but there are hints and traces of another influence in his novel, which is all the more curious because Charles Reade never minimized woman's part in fiction. The hints and traces, to be sure, are in the manner, but there is a deeper affinity between the two writers in their divination of women's nature. Reade turned his seership to flattering account, and so won the favor of a sex which he was apt to symbolize in the innocence of serpents and the wisdom of doves; but it is the defect of Mr. De Forest's temperament that he could not flatter the foibles of womanhood, or even its faults. I remember in "Miss Ravenel's Conversion" a very lurid Mrs. Leroy, of whom I cannot think without shuddering. The wife of Honest John Vane is pitilessly ascertained, and there is a widow in "Playing the Mischief" who is not a mirror for widows, to say the least. In "Kate Beaumont," the old flirt, Mrs. Chester, and the young flirt, Jenny Devine, are treated with a contempt equally open and unsparing. All the more to the honor of such a brave and essentially good woman as Nellie Armitage, who has married to her hurt and kept it hidden, is the praise of an author so chary of flattery for woman.

She has kept her hurt so well hidden that none of the Beaumonts who would have bathed it in blood have ever suspected it; and when she takes Kate home with her for a visit, the girl is simply fascinated with her handsome brother-in-law, and thinks her sister the happiest of wives. The day after her coming to his house Armitage is brought home from a debauch, and with her sister she comes upon him lying senseless.

"'Oh!' she exclaimed. . . . 'Is he — dying?' 'He is dead—dead drunk,' replied the wife. 'To think how I have loved him!' Nellie went on. 'That man has had all the good, all the best, that was in my heart. He has had it and trampled on it, and wasted it till it is gone. I can hate, now, and I hate him. . . . I have seen the time when I could kneel and kiss the figures of the carpet which his feet had rested upon. . . . And now see how I hate him and despise him. I can take a mean and cowardly revenge on him!' She suddenly advanced upon the senseless man, and slapped his face with her open hand. 'Oh, you woman, what are you doing?' exclaimed Kate, seizing her and drawing her away. 'Nellie, I won't love you!' 'Yes, I am hateful,' replied Nellie. 'Do you know why? I can't tell you half the reasons I have for being hateful. Look at that scar,' pointing to a mark on her forehead. . . . 'He did it. He struck me with his doubled fist, and that gash was cut by the ring which I gave him.' Kate sat down, covered her face with her hands, and sobbed violently. . . . 'He had struck me before, and he has struck me since. And there have been other insults. . . . Oh, if my father and brothers knew!' . . . 'They would kill him, Nellie,' whispered Kate, looking up piteously, as if pleading for the man's life. 'I know it. But that is not all. I have become so savage that it seems to me I would not mind that. What I care for is the exposure. If they should shoot him, people would learn why. It would be known that Nellie Beaumont could not live with her husband . . . that she had failed as a wife and a woman. . . . I shall stay and fight it out here till I can fight no longer. But I wanted some one's sympathy. I wanted at least to tell my sister how miserable I am.' She stopped, fell on her knees, laid her head in the girl's lap, and broke out in violent

crying. After a minute she rose, lifted Kate to her feet, embraced her passionately, and said in a voice which had suddenly become calm, 'This is my first cry in two years. My heart feels a little less like breaking. Let us go.' 'Do you suppose he has heard?' asked the young woman, glancing at Armitage. 'Heard?' answered Nellie, with a hard laugh. 'He couldn't hear the last trump, if it should be blown in this room. Isn't he horrible—and handsome?'"

## IV

After a first moment of prejudice, Mrs. Armitage had taken a sudden liking to Frank McAlister. When at last she realized that she must leave her husband, she was not sorry to find Frank on the train that took her and her sister back to their father's house. He behaved with such discreetness, and in regard to Kate with such slavish submission to Mrs. Armitage's will, that "'I am his sworn ally,' she said to her sister, as they drove home from the Hartland station. 'If he proposes, do you accept him. Then I will go to papa with the whole story, and if he is naughty, I will appeal to your grandpapa.'"

She lost no time in making her approaches to their father's heart through the story of her sufferings.

"'I have had to leave my husband, and I am excusable for telling why.' 'Had to leave your husband!' echoed the father, his bushy eyebrows bristling and his eyes turning bloodshot. 'The infamous scoundrel!' He was so much of a Beaumont that he . . . asked for no more than the fact that his daughter had felt herself compelled to leave her husband. On that he judged the case at once and forever. . . . 'Be perfectly easy. He won't live the month out.' 'Have

a care what you do,' replied Nellie. 'I don't want the whole world to know what I've suffered.' 'Who is going to know it?' interrupted the old fire-eater. 'By heavens, I will shoot the man that dares to know it!' . . . 'You can't shoot the women,' said Nellie."

The skill with which she plays upon the tenderness of her father in behalf of her sister, have their effect in his consenting that if the feud can once be extinguished Kate shall marry Frank McAlister. "'But I can't discuss it, now,' he protests. 'Do let me alone. Do you want to break my heart?' 'No, nor Kate's, either,' said Nellie," and presently there is a scene between Kate and her father, who sees her unhappy, and must know why.

"'Is it more than a Beaumont can endure?' he repeated, gently, though with an appeal to the family pride. 'No, it is not more,' answered Kate. . . . The father was not satisfied, for he did not want his daughter to suffer at all. . . . 'I did not seek this new quarrel,' he said. 'I can truly declare that Judge McAlister forced it upon me. I could live with the man decently, if he would let me.' 'Oh, father, I have nothing to say about these matters. Why do you explain them to *me?*' 'Because I don't want you to blame me. I can't bear it. I say I could live with those people. As for the young man,—I mean Mr. Frank McAlister,—I respect him and like him.' Kate, in spite of her virginal modesty, gave him a glance of gratitude that stung him. He started, and then resigned himself; the girl did love that man. . . . 'I must speak out,' he declared. 'It is my duty as a father. I know that this young man likes you and wishes to marry you. If your happiness is concerned, I must know that. Then I will see what I can do.' Kate could endure no longer; she was fairly driven into a burst of tears and sobbing; she clutched her

father, and buried her face in his neck, all the while kissing him. It was the same as to say, 'I am very miserable, but do not be unhappy about it, and do not be vexed with me.' 'Oh, my poor child,' he repeated several times, patting her shoulder in a helpless way, the most discomforted of comforters. At last she recovered her self-possession a little, gradually lifting her head until her lips touched his ear. 'Papa, I will tell you everything,' she whispered. 'I did love him, and oh, I do! If you had let him propose to me I should have taken him. But now it is different. Since I have seen how it must always be between our families, I have decided that I will never marry him, not even if you consent. I will not risk being put in hostility with my own family. And now let me go, quick. Let me run.' The instant he loosed his embrace she rustled out of the room, and away to her own chamber, shutting the door upon herself with a noise of hurry which he could plainly hear."

## V

All this, it must be owned, is very sweet and true; and there is nothing anywhere forced in the note of Kate Beaumont's character. She is always very naturally and delicately a girl, who suffers into admirable womanhood. But the want of something salient in her appearances unfits her for quotation.

Perhaps that is the worst that can be said of her. The worst that can be said of her author is that he was apt to leave his work in a certain unfinish, and at last he left it altogether. I think it one of the greatest pities of our literary history that about twenty years ago Mr. De Forest ceased to print if he did not cease to write fiction: I suspect that the only book he has recently published—"A Lover's Revolt"—is of a much earlier

invention. It has the virtues and the defects of all his work. It is strongest in the portrayal of men's characters, though its women cannot be said to be either weakly or falsely done. Their natures are truly but not kindly rendered, and this is a sort of error in the handling. Again, as always before, the artist's contempt for their duplicity masters his sense of the goodness, the sincerity indeed, which consists with that duplicity. He is distinctly a man's novelist, and as men do not need novelists so much apparently as women, his usefulness has been limited. When he was writing the novels which, like "Kate Beaumont," commanded for him the admiration of those among his countrymen best fitted to know good work, it seemed reasonable that he should be lastingly recognized as one of the masters of American fiction; and I for one shall never be willing to own him less, though I cannot read many pages of his without wishing he had done this or that differently. It is not only the master who chooses to leave things in the rough; it is sometimes the 'prentice who has not yet learned how to shape them perfectly. Still, in spite of all this I remember and I feel his strenuous imaginative gift working with a sort of disdainful honesty to the effects of art. Finer, not stronger workmen succeeded him, and a delicate realism, more responsive to the claims and appeals of the feminine over-soul, replaced his inexorable veracity. In the fate of his fiction, whether final or provisional, it is as if this sensitive spirit had avenged the slight it felt, and, as the habit of women is, over-avenged itself. It had revealed itself to him as it does only to the masters of fiction, and he had seemed not to prize the confidence —had mocked at it, or what was worse, had made it the text for dramatic censures far more cutting and insufferable than sermons. In the lapse of time, however, the woman-soul may revise and even reverse its

judgments. It is capricious as well as implacable, and it is possible that in some future moment it may fancy seeing itself as a most truthful man-soul saw it; and then Mr. De Forest's belated turn will have come.

## MR. JAMES'S DAISY MILLER

AS I have noted before in these papers, it is the fate of most novelists to be associated in the minds of readers with a certain type of heroine, or with a single heroine. If it is a type that represents the novelist he is not unfairly used; for the type may be varied into distinctive characters; if it is a single character it seems not so just, for every novelist has invented many characters. Mr. Henry James, for instance, has given us more, and more finely, yet strongly, differenced heroines than any novelist of his time, but at the mention of his name a single creation of his will come so prominently to mind that Daisy Miller will for the moment make us forget all her sisters.

### I

Mr. James's time is still ours, and while perfect artistry is prized in literature, it is likely to be prolonged indefinitely beyond our time. But he belongs pre-eminently to that period following the Civil War when our authorship felt the rising tide of national life in an impulse to work of the highest refinement, the most essential truth. The tendency was then toward a subtile beauty, which he more than any other American writer has expressed in his form, and toward a keen, humorous, penetrating self-criticism, which seized with joy upon the expanding national life, and made it the material of fiction as truly national as any yet known. Mr. J. W. De Forest

was the pioneer in the path which the American novelists were to take; and hard upon him came Mr. Henry James, as unlike him as one talent could well be unlike another, and yet of the same mission in preparing the way, and planting the seeds of an imaginative literature, native to our soil, but taking the four winds of heaven in its boughs. They were as like in their equipment, through study and sojourn abroad, as they have been unlike in their destiny. Mr. De Forest's books are a part of our literary history; Mr. James's books are a part of our literature. Mr. De Forest somehow offended "the finer female sense," in whose favor the prosperity of our fiction resides, and he is no longer read; Mr. James, who flattered it as little, lastingly piqued it, and to read him if for nothing but to condemn him is the high intellectual experience of the daughters of mothers whose indignant girlhood resented while it adored his portraits of American women. To enjoy his work, to feel its rare excellence, both in conception and expression is a brevet of intellectual good form which the women who have it prize at all its worth. This is not a history of American fiction, and I cannot arrange here for giving Mr. James even a provisional predominance in it; but those who know our short and simple annals, in that sort, will no doubt place him where he belongs. Those who do not know them may at least be told that no American writer has been more the envy and ambition of generous youth trying for distinction as well as sincerity in their work.

## II

Mr. James is not quite the inventor of the international novel, as I intimated in my notices of "The Initials," but he is the inventor, beyond question, of the inter-

national American girl. He recognized and portrayed the innocently adventuring, unconsciously periculant American maiden, who hastened to efface herself almost as soon as she saw herself in that still flattering if a little mocking mirror, so that between two sojourns in Europe, a decade apart, she had time to fade from the vision of the friendly spectator. In 1860–70, you saw her and heard her everywhere on the European continent; in 1870–80, you sought her in vain amidst the monuments of art, or on the misty mountain-tops, or at the tables d'hôte. Her passing might have been the effect of a more instructed civilization, or it might have been a spontaneous and voluntary disappearance. In any case she was gone, and it seemed a pity, for she was sweet, and harmless, with a charm derived from our earth and sky, a flavor of new-world conditions imparting its wilding fragrance to that strange environment as freely as to its native air. I could well fancy her discoverer feeling a pang of desolation to find no longer in the living world this lovely creature, who perished as it were of her own impossibility, and whose faded ghost has no habitat but in his faithful page.

It was perhaps in some such divine despair that he left the field of international fiction, which he had made his own, and had kept for so many years, and turned to English life, with only a thin American presence flitting now and then across the scene. He has done better work, because maturer work, in the treatment of this alien material than he did in the earlier fiction before he possessed himself of the international field. His English people have the convincing effect of having been more truly seen than others except Trollope's, but they are not those absolute contributions to polite learning which his internationals are. No one else could do them; certainly no living Englishman; and yet one resents the author's late preoccupation with them, and

demands his return to the types of that Atlantis, psychologically midway between Europe and America, where his art ripened and perfected itself in the study of character which confided its existence to him earliest if not onlyest. One demands this of him with a strong disposition to implore him, if the demand fails, to comply in the interest of history, which must, without his help, fail of some of the most curious and interesting, not to say significant, phases of modern civilization.

Since he began to note Americo-European manners, we have gone increasingly abroad, and his field has indefinitely broadened, and filled itself with an increasing variety of figures. If these have lost the refreshing sharpness of outline which first tempted his eye, they have gained in a fine differentiation which ought still more sympathetically to invite his subtle fancy. A whole new generation has grown up in the international field, and since he abandoned it, no one else has held it in any such force as to be able to dispute his sovereignty if he should come back to it.

## III

It is a curious and interesting fact of Mr. James's literary fortunes that in his short stories—one is obliged to call them stories for want of a more closely fitting word—rather than his more extended fictions are the heroes and the heroines we know him best by. He has the art of so environing the slightest presentment of female motive that it shows life-size in the narrow space of a sketch or study; and you remember such a picture with a fullness of detail and a particularity wanting to many colossal figures. You seem in the retrospect to have lived a long time with the pictures, looks, attitudes; phrases remain with you; and when you re-

vert to the book you do not lose this sense of rich amplitude. It would be futile to catalogue the personalities which are so real in the recollection of stories so numerous but not half numerous enough; and it is only for the pleasure of naming them over that I mention at random Mrs. Hedway in "The Siege of London," the terrible Georgina in "Georgina's Reasons," Madame Mauve in the story called after her, Pandora in "Pandora," Lady Barbarina in "Lady Barbarina Lemon," that pathetic presence in "The Altar of the Dead," the two wives of the master in "The Lesson of the Master," both the girls in "The Spoils of Poynton," the heroine, and Mrs. Dallow, the sub-heroine, in "The Tragic Muse," the daughter in "Marriages," the poor, shabbily defrauded girl in "Paste," the two "old things," the old maids, in "The Third Person," Lily in "Miss Gunton of Poughkeepsie." The list is inexhaustible, and it is not only futile but dangerous to deal with it, for your forgetfulness of any figure accuses your taste in all the rest, and if you leave out a general favorite you are in peril of falling a prey to the furious resentment of those who adore just that neglected heroine.

No other novelist has approached Mr. James in his appreciation of women, and in his ability to suggest the charm which is never wholly absent from women, whether they are good, bad or indifferent in looks or behavior. Take all the other men that have written novels in English and match their women with his, and they seem not to have written of women at all. A few women may vie with him in the portrayal of a few figures; Jane Austen may, and Fanny Burney, and Miss Edgeworth, and George Eliot, and the Brontës, and Mrs. Humphry Ward; but their heroines are as much outnumbered by his as the novelists are in every other way surpassed. The fact is not affected by the

want of general recognition; it is not yet known to the ignorant masses of educated people that Mr. James is one of the greatest masters of fiction who has ever lived. It is because he has worked in a fashion of his own, in regions of inquiry not traversed by the herd of adventurers, and dealt with material not exploited before that he is still to the critical Jews a stumbling-block and to the critical Greeks foolishness. But time will inevitably care for this unrivalled artist, or this unique psychologist who deals artist-wise with his knowledge of human nature; and he will yet take that eminent place for which he has no rival.

I cannot, in thinking of him and his somewhat baffling failure of immediate acceptance, promise myself that his right will be acknowledged soon; his own generation, in its superior refinement, was better fitted to appreciate him than the present period coarsened and vulgarized by the prevalence of puerile romance; and yet if his earliest masterpiece had been offered to this thicker-witted time, I doubt if it would have suffered the same injustice which it met from a more enlightened tribunal, or at least the same kind of injustice. It is pathetic to remember how "Daisy Miller" was received, or rather rejected, as an attack on American girlhood, and yet it is perfectly intelligible that it should have been taken so by Americans who had still a country to be so inclusively proud of that they could not bear the shadow of question to fall upon any phase of it. Our political descent to the European level has not only thickened our skins but it has in a manner so broadened, though it has imbruted our minds, that if she could have come again we should see Daisy Miller's innocent freedom in the face of immemorial convention with the liberal and tolerant pleasure which the English at once felt in it. We should not be blinded to her charm, or to the subtile patriotism which divined and

portrayed it, by a patriotism which, if fervent and generous, was not so subtile as the author's. But as I have said, Daisy Miller cannot come again. The very conditions that would render us patient of her now have rendered her impossibility impossible. It is a melancholy paradox, but we need not be inconsolable, for though she has perished forever from the world, we have her spiritual reflex still vivid in the sensitive mirror which caught with such accuracy her girlish personality while it still walked the earth in the dusty ways of European travel.

## IV

The story of Daisy Miller is as slight as Mr. James delights to make the frame of his picture, which depends so very little for its quality upon the frame. She is first seen at Vevey in Switzerland, with her young but terribly mature little brother and their mother, a little, lonely American group in the rather impertinent custody of a courier whom they make their domestic if not social equal; and she is seen last at Rome (where indeed she dies of the fever) the wonder of the international and the opprobrium of the compatriotic society. Such drama as arises from the simple circumstances precipitates itself in a few spare incidents which, in the retrospect, dwindle to nothing before the superior interest of the psychology. A girl of the later eighteen-seventies, sent with such a mother as hers to Europe by a father who remains making money in Schenectady, after no more experience of the world than she had got in her native town, and at a number of New York dinners among people of like tradition; uncultivated but not rude, reckless but not bold, inexpugnably ignorant of the conventionally right, and spiritedly resentful of control by criterions that offend her own

sense of things, she goes about Europe doing exactly what she would do at home, from an innocence as guileless as that which shaped her conduct in her native town. She knows no harm and she means none; she loves life, and talking, and singing, and dancing, and "attentions," but she is no flirt, and she is essentially and infinitely far from worse. Her whole career, as the reader is acquainted with it, is seen through the privity of the young Europeanized American who meets her at Vevey and follows her to Rome in a fascination which they have for each other, but which is never explicitly a passion. This side of the affair is of course managed with the fine adroitness of Mr. James's mastery; from the first moment the sense of their potential love is a delicate pleasure for the reader, till at the last it is a delicate pang, when the girl has run her wild gantlet and is dead not only of the Roman fever but of the blows dealt her in her course. There is a curious sort of fatality in it all. She is destined by innate and acquired indiscipline to do the things she does; and she is not the less doomed to suffer the things she suffers. In proportion to the offence she gives by her lawless innocence the things she does are slight things, but their consequences break her heart, and leave the reader's aching, as Winterbourne's must have ached life-long.

## V

The young man is sitting in the garden of the Trois Couronnes, at Vevey, talking with her terrible little brother, when Daisy Miller comes down the walk toward them. "She was dressed in white muslin, with a hundred frills and flounces, and knots of pale-colored ribbon. She was bareheaded, but she balanced in her hand a large parasol, with a deep border of embroidery,

and she was strikingly, admirably pretty. . . . He was ceasing to be embarrassed, for he had begun to perceive that she was not the least embarrassed herself. . . . She gradually gave him more of the benefit of her glance; and then he saw that this glance was perfectly direct and unshrinking. It was not, however, what would have been called an immodest glance, for the young girl's eyes were singularly honest and fresh. They were wonderfully pretty eyes; and, indeed, Winterbourne had not seen for a long time anything prettier than his fair countrywoman's various features —her complexion, her nose, her ears, her teeth. . . . As regards this young lady's face he made several observations. It was not at all insipid, but it was not exactly expressive; and though it was eminently delicate, Winterbourne mentally accused it—very forgivingly—of a want of finish. He thought it very possible that Master Randoph's sister was a coquette; he was sure she had a spirit of her own; but in her bright, sweet, superficial little visage there was no mockery, no irony." Before long it became obvious that she was much disposed to conversation—having first assured herself that he was "a real American." "Her lips and her eyes were constantly moving. She had a soft, slender, agreeable voice, . . . with all her prettiness in her lively eyes, and in her light, slightly monotonous smile."

Before the end of the day, her mother has evasively appeared and been unwillingly made acquainted with her daughter's unknown friend, whom the girl has already easily made invite her to go with him to see the castle of Chillon. The mother is not surprised, that evening, in the same garden, when Daisy tells him she wishes he would take her a row on the lake. Mrs. Miller sees no social objection, but suggests, "I should think you had better find out what time it is." The courier, however, who has arrived to announce

"SHE WAS STRIKINGLY, ADMIRABLY PRETTY"

that Randolph has gone to bed, ventures to interpose. "'I suppose you don't think it's proper!' Daisy exclaimed. . . . 'Oh, I hoped you would make a fuss. I don't care to go, now.' 'I myself shall make a fuss if you don't go,' said Winterbourne. 'That's all I want—a fuss,' and the young girl began to laugh again. . . . Daisy turned away from Winterbourne, looking at him, smiling, and fanning herself. 'Good-night,' she said, 'I hope you are disappointed, or disgusted, or something!' He looked at her, taking the hand she offered. 'I am puzzled,' he answered. 'Well, I hope it won't keep you awake.'"

I should not know where else to find the witless purposelessness—beyond the moment's excitement and the pleasure of bewildering a young man—in much of a girl's behavior more sufficiently yet more sparingly suggestive than in these admirable passages. The girl is a little fool, of course, but while her youth lasts she is an angelic, a divine fool, with caprices that have the quality of inspirations. She behaves at Vevey with Winterbourne, "a real American," as she would have done with a "gentleman friend" at Schenectady, but when he sees her next at Rome he finds her behaving with Italians as if they, too, were "gentlemen friends" at Schenectady. He meets her at the house of a Europeanized American lady who would fain Europeanize Daisy enough at least to save her from scandal. "Daisy was exchanging greetings very prettily with her hostess; but when she heard Winterbourne's voice she quickly turned her head. 'Well, I declare!' she said. 'I told you I should come,' Winterbourne rejoined smiling. 'Well, I didn't believe it,' said Miss Daisy. . . . 'You might have come to see me!' 'I arrived only yesterday.' 'I don't believe that,' the young girl declared. . . . 'Why, you were awfully mean at Vevey. You wouldn't do any-

thing. You wouldn't stay there when I asked you.' 'My dearest young lady,' cried Winterbourne with eloquence, 'have I come all the way to Rome to encounter your reproaches?' 'Just hear him say that!' said Daisy, giving a twist to a bow on Mrs. Walker's dress. 'Did you ever hear anything so quaint?' 'So quaint, my dear?' murmured Mrs. Walker, in the tone of a partisan of Winterbourne. 'Well, I don't know,' said Daisy, fingering Mrs. Walker's ribbons. 'Mrs. Walker, I want to tell you something! . . . You know I'm coming to your party. . . . But I want your permission to bring a friend. . . . It's an intimate friend of mine—Mr. Giovanelli,' said Daisy, without a tremor in her clear little voice, or a shadow on her brilliant little face. . . . 'He's an Italian; . . . he's the handsomest man in the world except Mr. Winterbourne! . . . He thinks ever so much of Americans. He's tremendously clever. He's perfectly lovely!'"

The afternoon before the party Mrs. Walker and Winterbourne find Daisy walking on the Pincio, at the supreme hour of the promenade, with Giovanelli, quite as she would have been with a "gentleman friend" at home. Mrs. Walker wants her to leave him and get into her carriage, but Daisy thinks it would disappoint and wound him, and she will not do that. In the evening she comes to the party long after her mother has appeared, and comes alone with Giovanelli, as she might with a "gentleman friend" in Schenectady. When she goes up to take leave of her hostess, Mrs. Walker turns her back on her. It is the beginning of the end, in which all society turns its back on Daisy.

Winterbourne sees her for the last time in the Colosseum at midnight, alone with Giovanelli. "'How long have you been here?' he asked almost brutally. Daisy, lovely in the flattering moonlight, looked at him a moment. Then, 'All the evening,' she answered,

MRS. WALKER TURNS HER BACK ON DAISY

gently. 'I never saw anything so pretty.' 'I am afraid that you will not think Roman fever very pretty. This is the way people catch it.' . . . 'I never was sick,' the girl declared. 'I don't look like much, but I'm healthy! I was bound to see the Colosseum by moonlight; I shouldn't have wanted to go home without that; and we've had the most beautiful time, haven't we, Mr. Giovanelli?' . . . 'I should advise you,' said Winterbourne, 'to drive home as fast as possible.' 'What you say is very wise,' Giovanelli rejoined. 'I will go and make sure that the carriage is at hand.' . . . Daisy followed with Winterbourne. He kept looking at her; she seemed not the least embarrassed. . . . Then noticing his silence, she asked him why he did not speak. . . . He only began to laugh. They passed under one of the dark archways; Giovanelli was in front with the carriage. Here Daisy stopped a moment, looking at the young American. '*Did* you believe, the other day, I was engaged?' . . . 'I believe it makes very little difference whether you are engaged or not!' He felt the young girl's pretty eyes fixed upon him through the thick gloom of the archway. . . . 'I don't care,' said Daisy, in a little strange tone, 'whether I have the Roman fever or not.'"

In her delirium she entreats her mother to tell Winterbourne that she never was engaged to Giovanelli. After her death he finds himself alone with the Italian by her grave. "He seemed to wish to say something. At last he said, 'She was the most beautiful young lady I ever saw, and the most amiable,' and then he added, 'and she was the most innocent.'"

## VI

The perfection of the workmanship in this little book could not be represented without an apparent exag-

geration which would wrong its scrupulous but most sufficient expression. If no word could be spared without in some degree spoiling it, none could be added without cumbering its beauty with a vain decoration. To quote from it at all is to wish to quote it all; and one resigns one's self the more easily to the impossibility of giving a notion of the perfection of the performance in view of the impossibility of imparting a due sense, at second hand, of the loveliness and truth of the conception.

The reader must go to the book for both, and when he has read it I think he will agree with me that never was any civilization offered a more precious tribute than that which a great artist paid ours in the character of Daisy Miller. But our civilization could not imagine the sincerity in which the tribute was offered. It could not realize that Daisy Miller was presented in her divine innocence, her inextinguishable trust in herself and others, as the supreme effect of the American attitude toward womanhood. The American man might have suffered her—perhaps more than suffered her; pitied her; adored her even—but the American woman would none of her. She fancied in the poor girl a libel of her nationality, almost a libel of her sex, and failed to seize her wilding charm, her flowerlike purity. The American woman would none of Daisy Miller, not because the American woman was ungracious or ungrateful, but because she was too jealous of her own perfection to allow that innocence might be reckless, and angels in their ignorance of evil might not behave as discreetly as worse people.

## MR. THOMAS HARDY'S HEROINES

IF I restrict myself somewhat in the space given to Mr. Hardy's heroines and seem scantly to treat of them in a paper or two, it is not because I value them less than the heroines of some novelists with whom I have allowed myself a wider range. But I am sensible that with all their witchery they are of a sisterhood, or at the most a cousinhood, which may be more typically represented, and that with their strong individual characters there is a strong family likeness among them all which may be suggested in the figures and actions of a few.

### I

I recall distinctly the order of my acquaintance with these lovely, if somewhat elusive, somewhat illusive ladies. It began with Elfride Swancourt in "A Pair of Blue Eyes," who revealed to me a fresh conception of the ever-womanly, and in whose fate passion and caprice, comedy and tragedy were so strangely mingled that one remembers her with a sigh that is half a smile and an adoration that rather slights its idol. She remained somehow exterior both to what she suffered and to what she did; it happened to her, or from her, but she did not seem responsible for it. Fancy Dare in "Under the Greenwood Tree" was morally more trammelled both in the cause and consequence. Yet she, too, was warped along by the toils of fate rather than

moved by her own will; and in fact most of the women of Mr. Hardy could urge that they *had* to do the things they did, even when they wished to do them. This was not quite so much the case with Bathsheba Everdene, in "Far from the Madding Crowd," as with some others. She, for a Hardy heroine, had a degree of control over her destiny which might almost be called free-will; at least she was not so much the prey of determinism as most of the others. It is true that she yields to a sort of fascination in Sargeant Troy, but only as all women in love do; she no more keeps her head than she keeps her heart in the mistaken marriage she makes. She has a powerful will, which does not avail her so much in the great as in the little things, and she has a sturdy common-sense of pretty much the same effect. Yet she is, upon the whole, the least wrought upon by her environment, and the most absolute of her sisterhood. The larger part of these are self-willed rather than strong-willed, as is eminently the case with Paula Power, in "The Laodicean." That is not nearly so great a novel as "Far from the Madding Crowd," but it is of a peculiar charm because it is the full expression of the sort of feminine personality which will bewitch men as long as the shifty graces of a weather-vane more take their fancy in women than the steadfast virtues of the sky-pointing steeple. Each worshipper hopes that somehow the vane when it turns in his favor will stand still there, and in fact this is what commonly happens first or last. Paula Power veered with most winds that blew, but while her purposes shifted her fancy was fixed in the young architect who had caught it, and who kept it, in spite of all her turning.

She was more nearly a society person than Mr. Hardy commonly paints, and had less of primitive earthiness than almost any of his heroines. In that terrible "Group of Noble Dames" with whom he makes us ac-

quainted in a series of wonderful histories the tellular quality of their natures is so much more appreciable than even the mundane, that they seem beings emancipated by their potent caprices and propensities from all the social obligations, and are not so much *grandes dames* as predatory creatures set by their caste above the moral law.

Mr. Hardy's heroines are good or they are bad, or they are now good and now bad, according to some inner impulse from some agency deeper or more primal than conscience. When they feel the pull of the moral law, they yield it a partial and provisional allegiance, as Fancy Dare does in "Under the Greenwood Tree," when she finds herself so differently in love with the vicar and with Dick the tranter that she is unable to reconcile the conflicting passions and acquires what merit she can by frankly owning the fact to the vicar and renouncing him; or as the pretty widow in "The Distracted Young Preacher," who acknowledges the error of smuggling, but sees some excuse for herself and her neighbors in the fact they "only do it in the winter." Perhaps we may best define the sort of woman this novelist places before us so livingly that we cannot doubt their reality by a process of exclusion in which we need not go farther than to say that they are wholly unlike American women. They are of the same stock racially, but ours are of a graft upon the parent stem so different that the two varieties of fruit are as little related as plums and apricots. In the Hardy lower-class heroines we see the primitive Englishwoman before she was touched by Puritanism, and in his middle and upper class heroines the same woman as she has grown into modern civilization unaffected by the tremendous force which has permeated and moulded the nature of the American great-great-grandnieces of that original Englishwoman. I have often wondered

what character untouched by Puritanism was like, and I have fancied that in the Hardy heroines I have seen; and if I cannot altogether approve of it, I can own its charm, as I can willingly acknowledge the ugliness and error and soul-sickness which Puritanism produced in building up our intensely personalized American conscience. If we take the case even of such a character as Sue Brodhead in "Jude," with her hysterically exaggerated impulses toward what her conscience bids her do, we have the nervous impressibility of the Puritanized woman, but we are made finely aware that it is the like effect of wholly different causes. It is the ecclesiasticized conscience which works in this English girl, not the personalized conscience which would drive a like American girl to the same frenetic extremes.

Oddly enough, as the reader will perhaps think, I am inclined to regard Ethelberta in "The Hand of Ethelberta" as one of the highest-minded of Mr. Hardy's women. At least she is one of those least swayed by passion, and of a mind the least darkened by exhalations from those dregs of pagan earthiness which lie at the base of his woman's natures. She is quite unselfish, and her ambition is for her family and the advancement of its modest fortunes. When the employment of her unique gift as a public story-teller makes it advisable for her to establish herself in London, and she takes a house there, with her brother for a page, one sister for cook and the other for housemaid, and her mother for a sort of upper servant, they all understand that it is for their good and not for her glory, and they acquiesce with the affection for her which she feels for them, and which she never fails to show on proper occasion. Dinner in a nobleman's house where her father the butler waits behind her chair while she figures as the celebrity of the hour is not a proper occasion, and she reserves

the display of her filial love for the meetings with her father behind her own doors. Even in the case of her young lover, whom she gives up for the bad-natured but good-humored old lord whom she marries, she has never been so much in love with him but she was willing to get him for her sister Picotee; and when she finds out how very wicked her amiable old lord is she does her best to escape from him; being prevented, she remains and reforms him.

The scheme is the most fantastic of Mr. Hardy's plots; but it must be owned it is delightful, and Ethelberta is one of the most delightful as well as one of the most respectable of his heroines. She is not quite candid, but, as I said, she is very unselfish, and I do not know that she has her moral superior in his fiction except Anne Garland, in "The Trumpet Major," or a pensive figure like Grace Melbury, in "The Woodlanders." Anne is the sweetest and freshest of his girls, and is of that level of life on which his muse seems to find herself most at home; she is above the lowest, but not so high as to tempt the author aside from her character to the complications of her social environment, which is, indeed, very simple. She is quite, though rather passively, constant to a lover who is rather actively inconstant but finally true to the young fancy they have had for each other; and she is (I hazard the notion) innately perhaps the most ladylike of Mr. Hardy's creations.

One heart-breaking presence among these I could not ignore without accusing myself of insensibility, and yet I cannot name Tess, in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," without a feeling of imperfection in the handling of her character which I might not be able to make apparent. I do not know that I wish to make it apparent, and I will only say that, profoundly pathetic as she is, Tess seems to me wanting in unity. She seems the

effect of two successive impulses of the author's imagination. In the first part of the story she is one Tess, whom the other Tess in the last part does not so much grow out of as seem joined to. They are halves of two figurines found in the same soil, and compact of the same clay, not belonging originally together, but joined by voluntary and conscious skill. I have owned that it would be difficult to prove this, and I shall not be hurt if the reader does not agree with me, or throws things at me in defence of one of the most pathetic heroines of fiction.

Yet I am inclined to hold to my opinion, and I will ask any irate differer to compare her evolution with that of Eustacia Vye, for instance, in "The Return of the Native." Poor Eustacia, with her sordid ambition and her selfish dreams of happiness, her selfish ideals of love, and her essential cold-heartedness in spite of her warm-bloodedness, is one to command the least respect among a generation of ladies who all command one's amused liking rather than one's respect—unless, indeed, it be that heroine of "The Mayor of Casterbridge" whom I shadowily remember as possibly shadier still, but whom I cannot recall by name.

## II

Eustacia Vye is one of those natures whose social evolution interests you so little that you do not care how vaguely it is suggested. We first find her in her grandfather's house on Egdon Heath, of which she is very fit to be the tutelary spirit, though she alone among the characters is not native to it, and has an ideal of life wholly alien to the wild and simple and solemn place. She longs for excitement, and for worldly triumphs and artificial splendors, and at Egdon she has only a lover

whom she cannot marry, and another whom, having married, she wearies of, though he is good and fine, and above her in everything but ambition. It is seldom that an author presents a heroine so palpably as Eustacia is shown in these richly descriptive passages.

"Eustacia Vye was the raw material of a divinity. On Olympus she would have done well with a little preparation. She had the passions and instincts which make a model goddess — that is, those which make not quite a model woman. . . . She was in person full-limbed and somewhat heavy; without ruddiness, as without pallor; and soft to the touch as a cloud. To see her hair was to fancy that a whole winter did not contain darkness enough to form its shadow. It closed over her forehead like nightfall extinguishing the western glow. Her nerves extended into those tresses, and her temper could always be softened by stroking them down. When her hair was brushed she would instantly sink into stillness and look like the Sphinx. She had pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries. Their light, as it came and went, and came again, was partially hampered by their oppressive lids and lashes; and of these the under lid was much fuller than it usually is with English women. This enabled her to indulge in reverie without seeming to do so; she might have been believed capable of sleeping without closing them up. . . . The mouth seemed formed less to speak than to quiver, less to quiver than to kiss. Some might have added, less to kiss than to curl. . . . One had fancied that such lip-curves were mostly lurking underground in the South as fragments of forgotten marbles. So fine were the lines of her lips that, though full, each corner of her mouth was as clearly cut as the point of a spear. This keenness of corner was only blunted when she was given over to sudden fits of gloom,

one of the phases of the night-side of sentiment which she knew too well for her years."

In this portrait the whole passionately selfish drama of the woman is suggested. Wildeve, a strange, lawless earth-spirit of like generation, trifles with her love, and her fancy wanders from him to Clym Yeobright, who returns from Paris, and settles down on the Heath, after his eyesight is threatened, as a furze-cutter. She does not mean to let him stay there, but to make him take her to Paris, or out into the world somewhere; and from time to time she sees Wildeve, after her marriage to Clym Yeobright, and at last elopes with him, and they are drowned together in the weir.

Mr. Hardy loves to keep close to nature in all his novels, but in none do we feel the breath of the earth as in this. The story keeps to the circuit of the lonely heath, with its few farms and hamlets; and much of it befalls by night, as suits the dusky soul of the heroine. A very significant bit, as regards her, and very characteristic as regards the courageous humor of the author, is that passage in which she keeps her bargain with the simple-hearted country boy who lends her his costume for a masquerading adventure on condition that she will let him hold her hand for a quarter of an hour.

"The next evening Eustacia stood punctually at the fuel-house door, waiting for the dusk which was to bring Charley with the trappings. . . . He appeared on the dark ridge of heathland. . . . 'Here are the things,' he whispered, placing them upon the threshold. 'And now, Miss Eustacia—' 'The payment. It is quite ready. I am as good as my word.' She leaned against the door-post, and gave him her hand. Charley took it in both his own with a tenderness beyond description, unless it was like that of a child holding a captured sparrow. 'Why, there's a glove on it!' he said,

in a deprecating way. 'I have been walking,' she observed. 'But, miss!' 'Well—it is hardly fair.' She pulled off the glove, and gave him her bare hand. They stood together without further speech, each looking at the blackening scene, and each thinking his and her own thoughts. 'I think I won't use it all up to-night,' said Charley, when six or eight minutes had been passed by them hand-in-hand. 'May I have the other few minutes another time?' 'As you like,' said she without the least emotion. 'But it must be over in a week. Now, there is only one thing I want you to do: to wait while I put on the dress, and then to see if I do my part properly. But let me look first indoors.' She vanished for a minute or two, and went in. Her grandfather was safely asleep in his chair. 'Now, then,' she said, on returning, 'walk down the garden a little way, and when I am ready I'll call you.' Charley walked and waited, and presently heard a soft whistle. He returned to the fuel-house door. . . . She struck the light, revealing herself to be changed in sex, brilliant in colors, and armed from top to toe. Perhaps she quailed a little under Charley's vigorous gaze, but whether any shyness appeared upon her countenance could not be seen by reason of the strips of ribbon which used to cover the face in mumming costumes, representing the barred visor of the mediæval helmet. 'It fits pretty well,' she said, looking down at the white overalls, 'except that the tunic, or whatever you call it, is long in the sleeve. The bottom of the overalls I can turn up inside. . . . Now you may leave me.' 'Yes, miss. But I think I'll have one minute more of what I am owed, if you don't mind.' Eustacia gave him her hand as before. 'One minute,' she said, and at about the proper interval counted on till she reached seven or eight. Hand and person she then withdrew to a distance of several feet, and recovered some of her

old dignity. The contract completed, she raised between them a barrier impenetrable as a wall. 'There, 'tis all gone; and I didn't mean quite all,' he said, with a sigh."

A whimsical comedy in the neighboring heath-dwellers plays round the central tragedy, and gilds with its phosphorescent gayety the gloom of the whelming doom. When it has come to Eustacia's feigning absence from home and letting her husband's mother toil back to her own house through the mid-day heat that kills her, the end is already in view, for she has not opened her door because Wildeve is within. In the scene with her husband which follows, Eustacia's peculiar nature is allowed to make itself felt in terms curiously wanting in dramatic intensity, but somehow adequate to the situation. He comes home early in the morning, and goes straight to her room. "The noise of his arrival must have aroused her, for when he opened the door she was standing before the looking-glass in her night-dress, the ends of her hair gathered into one hand, with which she was coiling the whole mass round her head, previous to beginning toilette operations. She was not a woman given to speaking first at a meeting, and she allowed Clym to walk across in silence, without turning her head. He came behind her, and she saw his face in the glass. It was ashy, haggard, and terrible. Instead of starting towards him in sorrowful surprise, as even Eustacia, undemonstrative wife as she was, would have done in days before she burdened herself with a secret, she remained motionless, looking at him in the glass. And while she looked, the carmine flush with which warmth and sound sleep had suffused her cheeks and neck dissolved from view, and the death-like pallor in his face flew across into hers. He was close enough to see this, and the sight instigated his tongue. 'You know what is the matter,' he said, husk-

"SHE SAW HIS FACE IN THE GLASS"

ily. 'I see it in your face.' Her hand relinquished the rope of hair and dropped to her side, and the pile of tresses, no longer supported, fell from the crown of her head about her shoulders and over the white night-gown in inky streams. She made no reply. 'Speak to me,' said Yeobright, peremptorily. The blanching process did not cease in her, and her lips now became as white as her face. One familiar with the stoic philosophy would have fancied that he saw the delicate tissue of her soul extricating itself from her body, and leaving it a simple heap of old clay. She turned to him and said, 'Yes, Clym, I'll speak to you. Why do you return so early? Can I do anything for you?' 'Yes, you can listen to me. It seems that my wife is not very well.' 'Why?' 'Your face, my dear; your face. Or perhaps it is the pale morning light which takes your color away? Now I am going to reveal a secret to you. Ha-ha!' 'Oh, that is ghastly!' 'What?' 'Your laugh.' 'There's reason for ghastliness, Eustacia; you have held my happiness in the hollow of your hand, and like a devil you have dashed it down!' She started back from her dressing-table, retreated a few steps from him, and looked him in the face. 'Ah! you think to frighten me,' she said, with a slight laugh. 'Is it worth while? I am undefended, and alone.' 'How extraordinary!' 'What do you mean?' 'As there is ample time I will tell you, though you know well enough. I mean that it is extraordinary that you should be alone in my absence. Tell me, now, where is he who was with you on the afternoon of the thirty-first of August? Under the bed? Up the chimney?' A shudder overcame her and shook the light fabric of her night-dress throughout. 'I do not remember dates so exactly,' she said. 'I cannot recollect that anybody was with me besides yourself.'"

Their quarrel ends in her leaving the house, and at

last the reader's heart almost turns to her in her self-pity, cruel and false as she has been.

"'Oh, oh, oh!' she cried, breaking down at last; and, shaking with sobs which choked her, she sank upon her knees. 'Oh, will you have done! Oh, you are too relentless — there's a limit to the cruelty of savages! I have held out long—but you crush me down. I beg for mercy—I cannot bear this any longer —it is inhuman to go farther with this! If I had—killed your—mother with my own hand—I should not deserve such a scourging to the bone as this. Oh, oh! God have mercy upon a miserable woman! . . . You have beaten me in this game—I beg you to stay your hand in pity! . . . I am going from this house. We cannot both stay here.' She hastily dressed herself, Yeobright moodily walking up and down the room the whole of the time. At last all her things were on. Her poor little hands quivered so violently as she held them to her chin to fasten her bonnet that she could not tie the strings, and after a few moments she relinquished the attempt. Seeing this, he moved forward and said, 'Let me tie them.' She assented in silence, and lifted her chin. For once at least in her life she was totally oblivious of the charm of her attitude. But he was not, and he turned his eyes aside, that he might not be tempted to softness."

## III

Elfride Swancourt, as compared with such an earth-spirit as Eustacia Vye, is an air-spirit, but she is quite as strictly of this world. One has a greater tenderness for her, and realizes that in her love affairs, so swiftly successive as to be almost simultaneous, she is quite unselfish, or at least she seeks her happiness only in that of the man she loves. She suffers cruel rejection

and punishment through Henry Knight, on whom her heart is truly set, because he thinks her a flirt, and is retroactively jealous of the young architect Stephen Smith, and cannot understand how she might have had a fancy for another before she was fixed in her passion for himself. But she recovers from the blow sufficiently to marry Lord Luxellian, and the final pathos of her story is not for her heart-break, but for her early death. The pang of this is such that it is difficult to get back of the fact to that earlier consciousness of her, in which one could laugh when an older woman said of her that Elfride would talk like a philosopher but would behave like a robin in a greenhouse.

This, indeed, was true of her mainly in minor matters of conduct; she was equal to the more heroic demands of life. There is a lovely honesty in her which mainly characterizes her in spite of much folly and heedless risk and downright defection. That is, she gives her fancy to Stephen Smith, and then she gives her heart to Henry Knight, without losing the reader's respect; for people change, and one preference pushes out another without sin, though not without suffering. It is the hard lot of women that, though they cannot always inspire men with constancy, they so embody men's highest ideal of it that they cannot change without violence to that ideal. They are therefore obliged to use finesse, when perhaps they would rather not, and try to seem unchanging even while they change.

It was Elfride's difficult problem to make Knight feel that she had never loved any one but him, while confronted in her own consciousness by the fact that in a different, if somewhat more ignorant way, she had at least very much liked being loved by Stephen Smith, if she had not loved him. She was really engaged to Smith when she met Knight, and she had somehow to get rid of the old love before reconciling herself to

happiness in the new. The affair was possible in its subjective implications, but objectively it countered with the devoted and exacting passion of Knight, and ended badly.

Nothing more prettily suggests this charming girl's complexity of emotion and simplicity of action than a scene which will have remained in every reader's memory; one of Mr. Hardy's peculiarly audacious and intimate scenes. With Knight she has got over the face of a lofty seaward cliff, and when he finds it impossible to return to her he helps her to get back and remains clinging to a face of rock where his hold must give way in a few minutes. There is no time to run for help, and there is none at hand except in her own wit. "On a sudden," we are told, "she vanished over the bank from his sight." She was gone for what seemed to him an eternity, but when she reappeared he noticed, as he looked up at her, "that in her arms she bore a bundle of white linen, and that her form was singularly attenuated. So preternaturally thin and flexible was Elfride at this moment that she appeared to bend under the light blows of the rain-shafts, as they struck into her sides and bosom, and splintered into spray on her face. . . . She sat down and hurriedly began rending the linen into strips. Those she knotted end to end, and afterwards twisted them like the strands of a cord. In a short space of time she had formed a perfect rope by this means, six or seven yards long. 'Can you wait while I bind it?' she said, anxiously extending her gaze down to him. 'Yes, if not very long. Hope has given me a wonderful instalment of strength.' Elfride wound the lengthy string she had thus formed round and round the linen rope, which . . . was now firm in every part. 'When you have let it down," said Knight, already resuming his position of ruling power, 'go back from the edge of the slope, and over

the bank as far as the rope will allow you. Then lean down, and hold the end with both hands.' . . . 'I have tied it round my waist,' she cried; 'and I will lean directly upon the bank, holding with my hands as well.' It was the arrangement he had thought of, but would not suggest. 'I will raise and drop it three times when I am behind the bank,' she continued, 'to signify that I am ready. Take care, oh, take the greatest care, I beg of you!' . . . She dropped the rope over him to learn how much of its length it would be necessary to expend on that side of the bank, went back, and disappeared as she had done before. The rope was trailing by Knight's shoulders. In a few moments it moved three times. He waited yet a second or two, then laid hold. . . . Half a dozen extensions of the arms, alternating with half a dozen seizures of the rope with his feet, brought him up to the level of the soil. He was saved, and sprang over the bank. At sight of him she leapt to her feet with almost a shriek of joy. Knight's eyes met hers, and with supreme eloquence the glance of each told a long-concealed tale of emotion in that short half-moment. Moved by an impulse neither could resist, they ran together and into each other's arms. . . . An overwhelming rush of exultation at having delivered the man she revered from one of the most terrible forms of death shook the gentle girl to the centre of her soul. It merged in a defiance of duty to Stephen, and a total recklessness as to plighted faith. Every nerve of her will was now in entire subjection to her feeling—volition as a guiding power had forsaken her. To remain passive, as she remained now, encircled by his arms, was a sufficiently complete result—a glorious crown to all the years of her life. . . . Elfride recovered herself, and gently struggled to be free. He reluctantly relinquished her, and then surveyed her from crown to toe. She seemed as small as

an infant. He perceived whence she had obtained the rope. 'Elfride, my Elfride!' he exclaimed in gratified amazement. 'I must leave you now,' she said, her face doubling its red, with an expression between gladness and shame. 'You follow me, but at some distance.' . . . Behind the bank, while Knight reclined upon the dizzy slope waiting for death, she had taken off her whole clothing, and replaced only her outer robe and skirt. Every thread of the remainder lay upon the ground in the form of a woollen and cotton rope. . . . She then ran off from him through the pelting rain like a hare; or more like a pheasant when, scampering away with a lowered tail, it has a mind to fly, but does not."

"SHE DROPPED THE ROPE OVER HIM"

## MR. THOMAS HARDY'S BATHSHEBA EVERDENE AND PAULA POWER

EACH great novelist arrives at, rather than with, his own way of looking at life. When he begins to make himself known to us, he is not himself alone, but the masters also who have gone before him, and who gradually leave him to himself as he shows more and more his ultimate power. All this, which is true of all novelists, is less true of Mr. Hardy than almost any other. He seemed to come from nowhere in literature, to be without preoccupations or affinities: the effect perhaps of his training in an art which is one of the most objective, and the farthest in its immemorial simplicities from the manifold consciousnesses of the literary art. Before he was a novelist, he was an architect, and what clung to him from tradition or association was not some other man's literary method or manner, but the habit of thinking, as it were in plastic terms, and of using words structurally. To be sure, when he first attracted criticism, people thought him like George Eliot, but it seems to me that this was a mistaken impression from their both dealing so largely with rustic life. The spirit of their respective dealing with it was not at all the same, and I do not think that Mr. Hardy's way of looking at life of any level is like the way of any novelist before him. As nearly as I can put it to myself it is the vision of humanity, as little as possibly affected by those influences from without — religious and moral — which we anxiously enough mistake for

impulses; it is the sense of *das ding an sich*, which we so rarely have had that we might say we never had it before. This is the first impression we have of life as Mr. Hardy shows it, but then we begin to perceive very gradually, but at last fully, how this primitive material is affected by experience, when the experience is vital, as most experience is not, and how it loses its original simplicity through experience and becomes a living soul. A vast number of the men and women in his novels never reach this development, but remain a part of mere nature like the cattle and poultry, the trees, the soil. They are delightful company just as these animate and inanimate things are. They are souls, and doubtless will live hereafter, but they are not living souls here and now; they are like

> —"sheep and goats
> That nourish a blind life within the brain."

Sometimes Mr. Hardy's people pass through tremendous experiences, and seem very little the more alive for them. A beautiful, perhaps a supreme, effort of his art is that his characters are in the last extreme of discovery impalpably veiled from your knowledge as people are whom you know best in the waking and working world. Something is still kept back—possibly for the final intimacies of another state of being.

## I

Do we ever come thoroughly to know Bathsheba Everdene in "Far from the Madding Crowd"? No more, I fancy, than if we were of her most familiar acquaintance. We understand the workings of her mind, and feel their charm, but that ultimate reason of her being, for which imagination aches in vain, is the secret

which is kept from the author himself. He is the greater power because of the reservation; if he could and would tell all, he would not be the master he is. And perhaps if he could explain her as exhaustively as we wish she would not be a woman. Our mystification, which continues to the end, begins with the first glimpses of Bathsheba which we share with her lover, Gabriel Oak.

"The sluggish day began to break. . . . He heard the steps of a horse at the foot of the hill, and soon there appeared in view an auburn pony with a girl on its back, ascending by the path leading past the cattle-shed. . . . Here he ensconced himself, and peeped through the loophole in the direction of the rider's approach. She came up and looked around—then on the other side of the hedge. . . . The path, after passing the cowshed, bisected the plantation. It was not a bridle-path—merely a pedestrian track, and the boughs spread horizontally at a height not greater than seven feet above the ground, which made it impossible to ride erect beneath them. The girl, who wore no riding-habit, looked around for a moment, as if to assure herself that all humanity was out of view, then dexterously dropped backwards flat upon the pony's back, her head over its tail, her feet against its shoulder, and her eyes to the sky. The rapidity of her glide into this position was that of a kingfisher—its noiselessness that of a hawk. Gabriel's eyes had scarcely been able to follow her. The tall, lank pony seemed used to such phenomena, and ambled along unconcerned. Thus she passed under the level boughs. . . . She had no side-saddle, and it was very apparent that a firm seat upon the smooth leather beneath her was unattainable sideways. Springing to her accustomed perpendicular like a bowed sapling, she seated herself in the manner demanded by the saddle,

though hardly expected of the woman. . . . An hour passed, the girl returned, properly seated now, with a bag of bran in front of her. On nearing the cattle-shed she was met by a boy bringing a milking-pail, who held the reins of the pony while she slid off. The boy led away the horse, leaving the pail with the young woman. Soon soft spirts alternating with loud spirts came in regular succession from within the shed. They were the sounds of a person milking a cow. Gabriel took the lost hat in his hand, and waited beside the path she would follow in leaving the hill. She came, the pail in one hand, hanging against her knee. The left arm was extended as a balance, enough of it being shown bare to make Oak wish that the event had happened in summer, when the whole would have been revealed. . . . She seemed tall, but the pail was a small one, and the hedge diminutive; hence, making allowance for error by comparison with these, she could have been not above the height to be chosen by women as best. All features of consequence were severe and regular. From the contours of her figure in its upper part, she must have had a beautiful neck and shoulders; but since her infancy nobody had ever seen them. Had she been put into a low dress she would have run and thrust her head into a bush. Yet she was not a shy girl by any means; it was merely her instinct to draw the line dividing the seen from the unseen higher than they do in towns."

It is Bathsheba whom we have seen here, and whose story agrees with his. I shall not tell Bathsheba over again, or do more than remind the reader that she does not marry the good Gabriel Oak till after she has married the unworthy Sergeant Troy whom her mad lover Boldwood kills, and so releases her to her right destiny with Oak. She is a girl of great good sense as well as beauty, and of that practical turn of mind which goes

with prettiness rather oftener than with plainness. She has inherited a farm from her uncle, and having been cheated by her manager she decides to manage it herself. There is a delightful prospect of this side of Bathsheba's character in the scene which passes between her and the farm-servants to whom she makes her purpose known.

"Half an hour later Bathsheba, in finished dress, and followed by Liddy, entered the upper end of the old hall to find that her men had all deposited themselves on a long form and a settle at the lower extremity. She sat down at a table and opened the time-book, pen in her hand, with a canvas money-bag beside her. From this she poured a small heap of coin. Liddy took up a position at her elbow and began to sew, sometimes pausing and looking round, or with the air of a privileged person, taking up one of the half-sovereigns lying before her and admiringly surveying it as a work of art merely, strictly preventing her countenance from expressing any wish to possess it as money. 'Now, before I begin, men,' said Bathsheba, 'I have two matters to speak of. The first is that the bailiff is dismissed for thieving, and that I have formed a resolution to have no bailiff at all, but to manage everything with my own head and hands.' The men breathed an audible breath of amazement. . . . 'Yes, sir—ma'am I mane,' said the person addressed. 'I am the personal name of Poorgrass—who is nothing in my own eye. In the eye of other people—well, I don't say it; though public thought will out.' 'What do you do on the farm?' 'I does carting things all the year, and in seed-time I shoots the rooks and sparrows, and helps at pig-killing, sir.' 'How much to you?' 'Please nine and ninepence and a good half-penny where 'twas a bad one, sir—ma'am I mane.' 'Quite correct. Now here are ten shillings in addition as a small present, as I am a

new-comer.' Bathsheba blushed slightly at the sense of being generous in public, and Henery Fray, who had drawn up towards her chair, lifted his eyebrows and fingers to express amazement on a small scale. 'How much do I owe you—that man in the corner—what's your name?' continued Bathsheba. 'Matthew Moon, ma'am,' said a singular framework of clothes with nothing of any consequence inside them, which advanced with the toes in no definite direction forwards, but turned in or out as they chanced to swing. 'Matthew Mark, did you say?—speak out—I shall not hurt you,' inquired the young farmer, kindly. 'Matthew Moon, mem,' said Henery Fray, correctingly, from behind her chair, to which point he had edged himself. 'Matthew Moon,' murmured Bathsheba, turning her bright eyes to the book. 'Ten and twopence halfpenny is the sum put down to you, I see?' 'Yes, mis'ess,' said Matthew, as the rustle of wind among dead leaves. 'Here it is, and ten shillings. Now the next—Andrew Randle, you are a new man, I hear. How came you to leave your last farm?' 'P-p-p-p-p-pl-pl-pl-pl-l-l-l-l-ease, ma'am, p-p-p-p-pl-pl-pl-pl-please, ma'am-please'm, please'm——' . . . 'Andrew Randle, here's yours—finish thanking me in a day or two. . . . Now the next. Laban Tall, you'll stay on working for me?' 'For you or anybody that pays me well, ma'am,' replied the young married man. 'True—the man must live!' said a woman in the back quarter, who had just entered with clicking pattens. 'What woman is that?' Bathsheba asked. 'I be his lawful wife!' continued the voice with greater prominence of manner and tone. . . . 'Oh, you are,' said Bathsheba. 'Well, Laban, will you stay on?' 'Yes, he'll stay, ma'am!' said again the shrill tongue of Laban's lawful wife. . . . The names remaining were called in the same manner. 'Now I think I have done with you,' said Bathsheba, closing

the book and shaking back a stray twine of hair. . . . 'No, ma'am.' 'The new shepherd will want a man under him,' suggested Henery Fray, trying to make himself official again by a sideway approach towards her chair. 'Oh—he will. Who can he have?' 'Young Cain Ball is a very good lad,' Henery said, 'and Shepherd Oak don't mind his youth?' he added, turning with an apologetic smile to the shepherd, who had just appeared on the scene, and was now leaning against the door-post with his arms folded. . . . 'Oh, I don't mind that,' said Gabriel. 'How did Cain come by such a name?' asked Bathsheba. 'Oh, you see, mem, his pore mother, not being a Scripture-read woman, made a mistake at his christening, thinking 'twas Abel killed Cain, and called en Cain, meaning Abel all the time. The parson put it right, but 'twas too late, for the name could never be got rid of in the parish. 'Tis very unfortunate for the boy.' . . . 'Very well then, Cainey Ball to be under-shepherd. And you quite understand your duties?—you I mean, Gabriel Oak?' 'Quite well, I thank you, Miss Everdene,' said Shepherd Oak from the door-post. 'If I don't, I'll inquire.' Gabriel was rather staggered by the remarkable coolness of her manner. Certainly nobody without previous information would have dreamt that Oak and the handsome woman before whom he stood had ever been other than strangers. . . . She then rose, but before retiring addressed a few words to them with a pretty dignity, to which her mourning dress added a soberness that was hardly to be found in the words themselves. 'Now mind, you have a mistress instead of a master. I don't yet know my powers or my talents in farming; but I shall do my best, and if you serve me well, so shall I serve you. Don't any unfair ones among you (if there are any such, but I hope not) suppose that because I'm a woman I don't understand the

difference between bad goings-on and good.' . . . 'And so good-night.' (All.) 'Good-night, ma'am.' Then this small thesmothete stepped from the table and surged out of the hall, her black silk dress licking up a few straws and dragging them along with a scratching noise upon the floor. Liddy, elevating her feelings to the occasion from a sense of grandeur, floated off behind Bathsheba with a milder dignity not entirely free from travesty, and the door was closed."

This is Bathsheba when her head is at work, and her common-sense. Another perspective of her when her heart is at work, and her uncommon feeling is not edifying, but it is doubtless as faithful. It is that famous scene of Sergeant Troy showing Bathsheba the broadsword exercise.

"At eight o'clock this midsummer evening, whilst the bristling ball of gold in the west still swept the tips of the ferns with its long, luxuriant rays, a soft brushing-by of garments might have been heard among them, and Bathsheba appeared in their midst, their soft, feathery arms caressing her up to her shoulders. . . . 'Now,' said Troy, producing the sword, which, as he raised it into the sunlight, gleamed a sort of greeting, like a living thing, 'first, we have four right and four left cuts; four right and four left thrusts. Infantry cuts and guards are more interesting than ours, to my mind; but they are not so swashing. They have seven cuts and three thrusts. . . . Now I'll be more interesting, and let you see some loose play—giving all the cuts and points, infantry and cavalry, quicker than lightning, and as promiscuously—with just enough rule to regulate instinct and yet not to fetter it. You are my antagonist, with this difference from real warfare, that I shall miss you every time by one hair's breadth, or perhaps two. Mind you don't flinch, whatever you do.' 'I'll be sure not to,' she said,

"'NOW MIND, YOU HAVE A MISTRESS INSTEAD OF A MASTER'"

invincibly. He pointed to about a yard in front of him. Bathsheba's adventurous spirit was beginning to find some grains of relish in these highly novel proceedings. She took up her position as directed, facing Troy. 'Now just to learn whether you have pluck enough to let me do what I wish, I'll give you a preliminary test.' He flourished the sword by way of introduction number two, and the next thing of which she was conscious was that the point and blade of the sword were darting with a gleam towards her left side, just above her hip; then of their reappearance on her right side, having apparently passed through her body. The third item of consciousness was that of seeing the same sword, perfectly clean and free from blood, held vertically in Troy's hand (in the position technically called 'recover swords'). All was as quick as electricity. 'Oh!' she cried out in affright, pressing her hand to her side. 'Have you run me through?—no, you have not! Whatever have you done!' 'I have not touched you,' said Troy, quietly. 'It was mere sleight of hand. The sword passed behind you. Now you are not afraid, are you? Because if you are I can't perform. I give my word that I will not only not hurt you, but not once touch you.' 'I don't think I am afraid. You are quite sure you will not hurt me?' 'Oh no—only stand as still as a statue. Now!' In an instant the atmosphere was transformed to Bathsheba's eyes. Beams of light caught from the low sun's rays, above, around, in front of her, wellnigh shut out earth and heaven—all emitted in the marvellous evolutions of Troy's reflecting blade, which seemed everywhere at once, and yet nowhere specially. These circling gleams were accompanied by a keen rush that was almost a whistling—also springing from all sides of her at once. In short, she was enclosed in a firmament of light, and of sharp hisses, resembling a skyful of meteors close

at hand. . . . It may safely be asserted with respect to the closeness of his cuts, that had it been possible for the edge of the sword to leave in the air a permanent substance wherever it flew past, the space left untouched would have been a complete mould of Bathsheba's figure. The hissing of the sword had ceased, and he stopped entirely. 'That outer loose lock of hair wants tidying,' he said, before she had moved or spoken. 'Wait: I'll do it for you.' An arc of silver shone on her right side; the sword had descended. The lock dropped to the ground. 'Bravely borne!' said Troy. 'You didn't flinch a shade's thickness. Wonderful in a woman!' 'It was because I didn't expect it. Oh, you have spoilt my hair!' 'Only once more.' 'No—no! I am afraid of you—indeed I am!' she cried. . . . 'But how could you chop off a curl of my hair with a sword that has no edge?' 'No edge! This sword will shave like a razor. Look here.' He touched the palm of his hand with the blade, and then, lifting it, showed her a thin shaving of scarf-skin dangling therefrom."

## II

The first glimpse of Paula Power in "The Laodicean" suggests a character as vividly as the first glimpse of Bathsheba, and gives us the sense of a heroine as thoroughly Hardyesque, though she is of such a different tradition and position. It is not in the cool, sequestered vale of life that Paula Power keeps the tenor of her way, but in the midst of worldly interests and ambitions which beset her as the heiress of a self-made father, who has made a great deal of money in the process of making himself. He has left her in possession of De Stancy Castle, where she lives with a daughter of the ancient house as her companion and friend, and in

charge of a Baptist chapel which he built, and bestowed on the congregation to which he belonged. It is from filial piety, rather than the other sort, that Paula has brought herself to the point of being baptized into this church; for her ecclesiastical affiliations, as a young lady of wealth, culture, and fashion, or potential fashion, would not otherwise have been with this unpicturesque and unworldly sect of dissenters. She is presented to the reader in the moment of attempting to fulfil her pious duty, and I think any reader will agree with me that her introduction is not less spectacular and impressive than that of Bathsheba Everdene, though the circumstances are altogether so different. As in the case of Bathsheba, we share the vision of the heroine with her lover, though now it is no such single nature as the Shepherd Oak, but the complex personality, not less sincere, of the young architect Somerset, that is concerned. Somerset is down from London on a sketching excursion, and has looked into the chapel at the close of a summer's day because he has happened to hear that there is to be a baptism in that strikingly ugly edifice.

"He gazed into the lighted chapel made what had been an evening scene when he looked away from the landscape night itself on looking back; but he could see enough to discover that a brougham had driven up to the side-door used by the young water-bearers, and that a lady in white-and-black half-mourning was in the act of alighting, followed by what appeared to be a waiting-woman carrying wraps. They entered the vestry-room of the chapel, and the door was shut. The service went on as before till at a certain moment the door between vestry and chapel was opened, when a woman came out clothed in an ample robe of flowing white, which descended to her feet. . . . She was rather tall than otherwise, and the contour of her head

and shoulders denoted a girl in the heyday of youth and activity. . . . His imagination, stimulated by this beginning, set about filling in the meagre outline with most attractive details. . . . She stood upon the brink of the pool, and the minister descended the steps at its edge till the soles of his shoes were moistened with the water. He turned to the young candidate, but she did not follow him: instead of doing so she remained rigid as a stone. He stretched out his hand, but she still showed reluctance, till, with some embarrassment, he went back, and spoke softly in her ear, afterwards saying in a voice audible to all who were near, 'You will descend?' She approached the edge, looked into the water, and gently turned away. Somerset could for the first time see her face. . . . The total dissimilarity between the expression of her lineaments and that of the countenances around her was not a little surprising, and was productive of hypotheses without measure as to how she came there. She was, in fact, emphatically a modern type of maidenhood, and she looked ultra-modern by reason of her environment: a presumably sophisticated being among the simple ones —not wickedly so, but one who knew life fairly well for her age. . . . 'And you refuse?' said the astonished minister, as she still stood immovable on the brink of the pool. He added to the force of his pleading by persuasively taking her sleeve between his finger and thumb as if to draw her; but she resented this by a quick movement of displeasure, and he released her, seeing that he had gone too far. 'But, my dear lady,' he whispered, 'you promised. Consider your profession, and that you stand in the eyes of the whole church as an exemplar of your faith.' 'I cannot help it,' she said, trying to get away. 'You came here with the intention to fulfil the Word?' 'But I was mistaken.' 'Then why did you come?' She tacitly implied that to

be a question she did not care to answer. 'Please say no more to me: I can wait no longer,' she murmured, and hastened to withdraw. But the minister was not without insight, and he had seen that it would be useless to say more. The crestfallen old man had to turn round upon the congregation and declare officially that the baptism was postponed. She passed through the door into the vestry. . . . His face had a severe and even denunciatory look as he gave out his text, and Somerset began to understand that this meant mischief to the person who had caused the hitch. . . . The sermon straightway began, and went on, and it was soon apparent that the commentary was to be no less forcible than the text. It was also apparent that the words were, virtually, not directed forward in the line in which they were uttered, but through the chink of the vestry-door, that had stood slightly ajar since the exit of the young lady. . . . At this moment there was not in the whole chapel a person whose imagination was not centred on what was invisibly taking place within the vestry-door. The thunder of the minister's eloquence echoed, of course, through the sister's cavern of retreat no less than round the public assembly. What she was doing inside there—whether listening contritely, or haughtily hastening to get away from the chapel and all it contained—was obviously the thought of each member. . . . The sermon ended, the minister wiped his steaming face and turned down his cuffs, and nods and sagacious glances went round. . . . For Somerset there was but one scene: the imagined scene of the girl herself as she sat alone in the vestry. The fervent congregation rose to sing again, and then Somerset heard a slight noise on his left hand which caused him to turn his head. The brougham, which had retired into the field to wait, was back again at the door: the subject of his rumination

came out from the chapel—not in her mystic robe of white, but dressed in ordinary fashionable costume—followed as before by the attendant with other articles of clothing on her arm, including the white gown. Somerset fancied that the younger woman was drying her eyes with her handkerchief, but there was not much time to see: they quickly entered the carriage, and it moved on. Then a cat suddenly mewed, and he saw a white Persian standing forlorn where the carriage had been. The door was opened, the cat taken in, and the carriage rolled away."

III

I feel a kind of defeat in my efforts to impart a conception of Mr. Hardy's heroines by the quotation of this or that passage. They live so much more in what they think and feel and say than in what they do, that no scene or incident can do them justice, as a scene or incident might in the case of Charles Reade's heroines, for instance. Many scenes, many incidents in which the Hardy heroines figure remain vivid in the mind, but if taken from the context they do not tell the story as one would think.

This may happen because the psychological texture of the story is as close and strong as the sociological texture is loose and slight. I have already intimated my sense of the unimportance of this in Mr. Hardy's fiction, as compared with the recognition of the deeper relations of human beings. We scarcely think of his people as of this calling or that station at all, after the first moment, and even in making their acquaintance we do not concern ourselves with the part attributed to them in society; we often wholly forget it, though we never lose the sense of their intense reality. If any one will contrast the sense of life imparted by a novel of

Trollope's, say, with that given by a novel of Mr. Hardy, I believe he will get my meaning. These masters are of the same sincerity and veracity; but Trollope reaches man through society, and Mr. Hardy finds him in nature.

There is a great deal of society in "The Laodicean." People do things in the forms and customs that constitute the history of every-day life; but through the stream of these little ordinary events pulses the current of poetry and passion, and bears the lovers along in a splendid isolation from the events pressing upon them from all sides. For instance—but like all the other instances this will be imperfect!—Paula has been giving a sort of garden-party at De Stancy Castle, which Somerset as her architect is restoring in parts, and they have been dancing in the marquee with Paula's guests, just before a shower breaks upon it.

"The dance was over, and he had retired with Paula to the back of the tent, when another faint flash of lightning was visible through an opening. She lifted the canvas, and looked out, Somerset looking out behind her. Another dance was begun, and, being on this account left out of notice, Somerset did not hasten to leave Paula's side. 'I think they begin to feel the heat,' she said. 'A little ventilation would do no harm.' He flung back the tent door where he stood, and the light shone out upon the grass. 'I must go to the drawing-room soon,' she added. 'They will begin to leave shortly.' 'It is not late. The thunder-cloud has made it seem dark—see there; a line of pale yellow stretches along the horizon from west to north. That's evening —not gone yet. Shall we go into the fresh air for a minute?' She seemed to signify assent, and he stepped off the tent floor upon the ground. She stepped off also. The air out-of-doors had not cooled, and without definitely choosing a direction they found themselves ap-

proaching a little wooden tea-house that stood on the lawn a few yards off. Arrived here, they turned, and regarded the tent they had just left, and listened to the strains that came from within it. 'I feel more at ease now,' said Paula. 'So do I,' said Somerset. 'I mean,' she added, in an undeceiving tone, 'because I saw Mrs. Goodman enter the tent again just as we came out here; so I have no further responsibility.' 'I meant something quite different. Try to guess what.' She teasingly demurred, finally breaking the silence by saying, 'The rain is come at last,' as great drops began to fall upon the ground with a smack, like pellets of clay. In a moment the storm poured down with sudden violence, and they drew further back into the summer-house. The side of the tent from which they had emerged still remained open, the rain streaming down between their eyes and the lighted interior of the marquee like a tissue of glass threads, the brilliant forms of the dancers passing and repassing behind the watery screen, as if they were people in an enchanted submarine palace. 'How happy they are!' said Paula. 'They don't even know that it is raining. I am so glad that my aunt had the tent lined; otherwise such a downpour would have gone clean through it.' The thunder-storm showed no symptoms of abatement, and the music and dancing went on more merrily than ever. 'We cannot go in,' said Somerset. 'And we cannot shout for umbrellas. We will stay here till it is over, will we not?' 'Yes,' she said, 'if you care to. Ah!' 'What is it?' 'Only a big drop came upon my head.' 'Let us stand further in.' Her hand was hanging by her side, and Somerset's was close by. He took it, and she did not draw it away. Thus they stood a long while, the rain hissing down upon the grass-plot, and not a soul being visible outside the dancing-tent save themselves. 'May I call you Paula?' asked he. 'Yes, occasionally,' she

"'MAY I CALL YOU PAULA?"

murmured. 'Dear Paula! May I call you that?' 'Oh no—not yet.' 'But you know I love you?' he insisted. 'I can give a shrewd guess,' she said, slyly. 'And shall I love you always?' 'If you wish to.' 'And will you love me?' Paula did not reply. 'Will you, Paula?' he repeated. 'You may love me.' 'But don't you love me in return?' 'I love you to love me.' 'Won't you say anything more explicit?' 'Not a single word!' Somerset emitted half a sigh: he wished she had been more demonstrative, yet felt that this passive way of assenting was as much as he could hope for. Had there been anything cold in her passivity he might have felt repressed; but her stillness suggested the stillness of motion imperceptible from its intensity. 'We must go in,' said she. 'The rain is almost over, and there is no longer any excuse for this.' Somerset bent his lips toward hers. 'No,' said the fair Puritan decisively. 'Why not?' he asked. 'Nobody ever has.' 'But!——' expostulated Somerset. 'To everything there is a season, and the season for this is not just now,' she answered, walking away."

## IV

Yes, this instance, like all the others, is imperfect and inadequate to the message it is meant to bear in my criticism, and I have to blame myself for letting a subordinate book so largely represent the very great and singular artist I have attempted to deal with. He has reached the height of his power, I think, in his tremendous novel, "Jude the Obscure," where Fate, so humorous and at the worst ironical, in so many of his stories, turns luridly tragical. No greater and truer book has been written in our time or any; and yet "Jude," if it were to be quoted from significantly, is not to be quoted from in this company at all, without risk

ritic of sharing the misunderstanding which
e author. It may be safely said, however—
ıy rate it shall be ventured—that in "Jude,"
ın he morbid, half-crazed endeavor of the heroine
ton by her own sacrifice for the cursed spite of con-
ns the novelist makes an offering at the shrine of
ν anly which ought to appease that deity, if ever
ıas ɛen offended—by a sense of slight or mocking
his adoration. It is not a book which could harm
nocence- harm innocence, but cer-
ainly it is not a boo perience. For experience,
nowever, it is full of wisdom, and for the heart and mind open to the fearful implications of such a history and temperament as Sue Brodhead's it has problems of tremendous appeal. It would be worthy the study of experience if for nothing else than as the work of a talent there eventuating in its ultimate seriousness.

## WILLIAM BLACK'S GERTRUDE WHITE

IN my sense of at least partial defeat by the heroines of Mr. Hardy, who have suffered me to represent them mainly in some of their lighter moments, I am sufficiently humiliated to make a confession that I would rather not have made. I confess that I never read a novel of Blackmore's, or a novel of Stevenson's, or more than one novel of Mr. George Meredith's; and though I might qualify myself to speak of their heroines by taking a course of their fiction, I am afraid that my appreciation would have a perfunctory look out of keeping with the prevailing complexion of these studies. I might learn what those ladies were like, but I should have no associations with them from the past, no remembered passion; and if it is not now too late with me to form a passion for a new heroine, it would not be, perhaps, becoming.

### I

In the case of Stevenson I am hardly a great loser, I fancy, unless I am wrong in supposing his romances are mostly stories of adventure, such as the heroine does not best develop in. As I have before intimated she cannot make her peculiar powers felt in the highest degree by the hero who is saving her life or defending her honor; she requires the safety and quiet of normal conditions for the last effect of her charm, which is the translation of every-day life into a supernal ecstasy. I

dare say I could not make so good my defence in the case of Blackmore, for Lorna Doone is a heroine whose adorers simply troop at her heels. I can only reget that I have not her acquaintance, and sigh that it seems too late to make it. As for Mr. George Meredith's heroines, my experience is confined to such of them as may be met in "Beauchamp's Career," and from that I have no recollection of them by name; I was barely fifty when I read the book, but one begins to forget names so early. I do, however, have the impression that they talked a great deal as Mr. Meredith writes, though they shared this foible with all the other characters; and I could not greatly blame them since his writing gave me the sense of a singularly powerful mind and generous spirit. I thought "Beauchamp's Career" a magnificent piece of intellectuation, fused through and through by electrical emotion. But I could not get farther with the author, though I tried one novel of his after another, as one votary of his after another solemnly promised me conversion in the interest of my soul's salvation. I remained and I still remain unable to reconcile my æsthetics with his, though I uncover to his ethics as I know them in "Beauchamp's Career."

He appears to me a powerful, wilful talent, who could have flourished into critical acceptance as a novelist only in an atmosphere of such æsthetic anarchy as wraps the British Isles; but he may some day appear differently to me through my greater knowledge of him. This has happened to me with Mr. George Moore, whom I long shied off from because I fancied him doing over again, from the realistic formula, the work of M. Zola. M. Zola seemed doing it so fully that I thought myself in no need of Mr. George Moore; but his "Esther Waters" showed me how mistaken I was. That is a great book, and if it had not appeared in an age which has been spoiled by great fictions, it would have been

prized as one of the greatest. I know that it won celebrity of even the popular sort, and that it received critical recognition; but it has not achieved the lasting credit which is its due. Its very merits forbid me to study it here, for the sad, plain, naked truth about life is apt to shock, or to make people think they are shocked, and in its facts it is sometimes outside of those decorums of Anglo-Saxon fiction which I have been treating as the decencies. So is the very powerful group of studies which the author calls "The Celibates," and which the mere name of brings back my strong emotion in reading them. The three differing types of the womanly presented there are of that novelty and reality in which life abounds, but which we suppose exhausted because fiction, like history, so commonly repeats itself. Mr. Moore's fiction is not like history in this, and it is probably more like *memoires pour servir* than like history in its way of dealing with the unupholstered human soul. But I am aware that the upholstered soul is more presentable to mixed companies, especially when there are young people present; and so I leave this author's heroines out of my series, though I cannot leave them out of my mind, and I wish to make my manners to what I think their prodigious veracity.

## II

There is no such embarrassment as I have here hastened to escape in dealing with the heroines of William Black, who are quite of the Anglo-Saxon tradition. They are nice girls even when they are naughty, as some of them are; or at least they do not misbehave beyond the bounds of convention. They flirt, but unless flirtation is a sin, they do not sin, and they are not sinned against very direly. They began rather simply

and naturally in the course of a journey in a phaeton, whose "Strange Adventures" once pleased so greatly, and they almost ended, and rather insipidly, in the voyage of a house-boat. The two novels indicated will occur to most readers whose novel reading extended from 1870 to 1890; but in the interval there were other novels of Black's which signalized his deeper knowledge of human and of woman nature, and his growing dramatic power. This power was apt at times to disperse itself in the sobs and tears of hysterical emotion, but there is no doubt that short of such climaxes it was a power. It relaxed rather too often in the description of natural scenery, and killed too many salmon, and quoted too much Gaelic; but still it was power. In such a story as "Madcap Violet" it triumphed in character then new to fiction and of interesting actuality in life; and in "Macleod of Dare" it went deeper, and came up with stronger contrasts to truly tragical purpose.

"Macleod of Dare" seems to have been the highest as well as deepest reach of the author's art; for after it he continued to repeat himself with varying effect, and returned ultimately to that earlier method and manner which won him his public. It was never the best public, never the most critical, and yet his work had friends of the most critical instincts, and the most fastidious tastes, who accepted him with reservation, but without patronage. A sense of his innate manliness forbade that; and upon the whole he enjoyed while he lived a dignified popularity which, since his death, has not quite become fame. Yet his work is so very much better than that of novelists who in a time of inferior fiction did achieve remembrance that one resents for him the sort of unjust neglect which it has fallen into. It was his fate or his accident to begin writing naturalistic fiction of the old-fashioned English kind, and to establish himself as a lover of real life just before the violent

campaign for naturalism began on the Continent, where almost nothing that was nice and almost everything that was nasty was accounted natural. He continued writing in his own way amidst the impassioned struggle against romanticism in France, Spain, and Italy, and remained no more affected by the polemics of M. Zola than by the perfection of Flaubert or Maupassant. The great, the matchless fiction of Russia did not move him from his course, and his constant English public stood by him, while the more fitful favor of his American friends did not always fail him. He saw the fall of the Dickens worship and the rise of the Thackeray doubt. Trollope outlived himself, and George Eliot died after the distinct decline of her too deeply ethicised art; and there was a moment when William Black might have been recognized as the leading writer of English fiction, unless we are to count some novelists of finer skill and greater force in the American condition of English fiction. But unhappily for his supremacy the vaster and deeper and fresher naturalism of Mr. Thomas Hardy began to make itself known, and William Black's chance was gone. There was no later chance, and he was left to end his career to the strains of the muted second violin, which form the saddest music in the world to the performer's ear.

## III

No writers could be more opposite in their realism than the novelist whom I have just named, and Black. Both are poets, and both are apt to seek in nature the charm they make us feel, but the final sense of the mystery and loveliness imparted by Mr. Hardy is of something which his heroine confers upon her circumstance, and in Black's fiction it seems something which she

derives from it. I am now thinking chiefly of such a girl as Gertrude White in "Macleod of Dare," who is as dependent upon society for means of self-expression as any heroine I know, and yet is as genuine a personality as may be met in fiction. She was recognized with an art which was perhaps at its best in her portrayal, and she had a freshness which is now gone from her type. She belongs to that social moment, since satirized beyond recall, when æsthetics began to be so generally received into society that society seemed to have become æsthetical. In that instant of fine confusion the stage especially went into society so much that it might well appear that society had gone upon the stage; and a brilliant and beautiful young actress like Gertrude White, meeting Sir Keith Macleod at a fashionable house, would never have suggested the theatre to the young Highlander dropped down in London from his native isles.

"'But you have seen our elm—our own elm,' said Mrs. Ross, who was arranging some azaleas that had just been sent her. 'We are very proud of our elm. Gertrude, will you take Sir Keith to see our noble elm?' He had almost forgotten who Gertrude was; but the next second he recognized the low and almost timid voice that said: 'Will you come this way, then, Sir Keith?' He turned, and found that it was Miss White who spoke. How was it that this girl, who was only a girl, seemed to do things so easily, and gently, and naturally, without any trace of embarrassment or self-consciousness? He followed her, and knew not which to admire the more, the careless simplicity of her manner or the singular symmetry of her tall and slender figure. He had never seen any statue or any picture in any book to be compared with this woman, who was so fine and rare and delicate that she seemed only a beautiful tall flower in this garden of flowers. There

was a strange simplicity, too, about her dress—a plain, tight-fitting, tight-sleeved dress of unrelieved black, her only adornment being some bands of big blue beads worn loosely round the neck. The black figure, in this shimmer of rose pink and gold and flowers, was effective enough; but even the finest of pictures or the finest of statues has not the subtle attraction of a graceful carriage. Macleod had never seen any woman walk as this woman walked, in so stately and yet so simple a way. From Mrs. Ross's chief drawing-room they passed into an ante-drawing-room, which was partly a passage and partly a conservatory. On the window side were some rows of Cape heaths. . . . 'Look at this beautiful heath. Mrs. Ross is very proud of her heaths.' The small white fingers scarcely touched the beautiful blossoms of the plant; but which were the more palely roseate and waxen? If one were to grasp that hand—in some sudden moment of entreaty, in the sharp joy of reconciliation, in the agony of farewell—would it not be crushed like a frail flower? 'This is our elm,' said she, lightly. 'Mrs. Ross and I regard it as our own, we have sketched it so often.' They had emerged from the conservatory into a small square room, which was practically a continuation of the drawing-room, but which was decorated in pale blue and silver, and filled with a lot of knickknacks that showed it was doubtless Mrs. Ross's boudoir. And out there, in the clear June sunshine, lay the broad green sward behind Prince's Gate, with the one splendid elm spreading his broad branches into the blue sky, and throwing a soft shadow on the corner of the gardens next to the house. How sweet and still it was!—as still as the calm clear light in this girl's eyes. There was no passion there, and no trouble; only the light of a June day, and of blue skies, and a peaceful soul. She rested the tips of her fingers on a small rosewood table that stood

by the window: surely if a spirit ever lived in any table, the wood of this table must have thrilled to its core."

Macleod in his dreaming did not dream her an actress, but because her very life was an art she was not less acting now than she was the night of the same day, when he saw her on the stage, in a comedy which had been a very stupid conventional play till she appeared. "Suddenly his heart seemed to stand still altogether. It was a light, glad laugh — the sound of a voice he knew—that seemed to have pierced him as with a rifle ball; and at the same moment from the green shimmer of foliage in the balcony there stepped into the glare of the hall a young girl with life and laughter and a merry carelessness in her face and eyes. She threw her arm around her mother's neck and kissed her. She bowed to the legal person. She flung her garden hat on to a couch, and got up on a chair to get fresh seed put in for her canary. It was all done so simply and naturally and gracefully that in an instant a fire of life and reality sprang into the whole of this sham thing. The woman was no longer a marionette, but the anguish-stricken mother of this gay and heedless girl. And when the daughter jumped down from the chair again — her canary on her finger—and when she came forward to pet and caress and remonstrate with her mother, and when the glare of the lights flashed on the merry eyes, and on the white teeth and laughing lips, there was no longer any doubt possible. Macleod's face was quite pale. He took the programme from Agilvie's hand, and for a minute or two stared mechanically at the name of Miss Gertrude White, printed on the pink-tinted paper."

Again she is acting, but neither more nor less consciously, when Macleod comes to luncheon, and she makes the maid give her the salad to dress, while the keen eyes of her young sister divine her and deride her.

GERTRUDE WHITE

"'There is no use making any pretense,' said she, sharply. 'You know quite well why you are making that salad dressing.' 'Did you never see me make salad dressing before?' said the other, quite as sharply. 'You know it is simply because Sir Keith Macleod is coming to lunch. I forgot all about it. Oh, and that's why you had the clean curtains put up yesterday!' . . . What else had this precocious brain ferreted out? 'Yes, and that's why you bought papa a new necktie,' continued the tormentor, and then she added, triumphantly, '*But he hasn't put it on this morning—ha, Gerty?*' A calm and dignified silence is the best answer to the fiendishness of thirteen. Miss White went on with the making of the salad dressing. She was considered very clever at it. A smart young maid-servant, very trimly dressed, made her appearance. 'Sir Keith Macleod, miss,' said she. 'Oh, Gerty, you're caught,' muttered the fiend. But Miss White was equal to the occasion. The small white fingers plied the fork without a tremor. 'Ask him to step this way, please,' she said. And then the subtle imagination of this demon of thirteen jumped to another conclusion. 'Oh, Gerty, you want to show him that you are a good housekeeper —that you can make salad'—"

## IV

It will be remembered that Macleod is instantly in love with Gertrude, and has no thought but of marrying her and making her leave the stage. He has found her in society intellectually inferior to her, of course, but rich and refined, and delicately appreciative of such bricabrac as she; and though he is a splendid young fellow with generous possibilities of life-long adoration for the woman he loves, he has no conception

of the sacrifice she must make in giving up her career, to be the wife of a Highland chieftain on the wild Scottish shore. She has no conception of it, either, when she promises.

Her selfish old father, the collector of other bricabrac than she, does not like the match, and consents unwillingly that she shall leave the life for which he has had her so carefully trained, and in which her success has so far been so brilliant. "'I will beg you to remember, Gerty,' he remarked with some dignity, 'that I did not make you an actress, if that is what you imply. If it had not been entirely your own wish, I should never have encouraged you; and I think it shows great ingratitude, not only to me, but to the public also, that when you have succeeded in obtaining a position such as any woman in the country might envy, you treat your good fortune with indifference, and show nothing but discontent. I cannot tell what has come over you of late. You ought certainly to be the last to say anything against a profession that has gained for you such a large share of public favor——' 'Public favor!' she said, with a bitter laugh. 'Who is the favorite of the public in this very town? Why, the girl that plays in that farce—who smokes a cigarette, and walks round the stage like a man, and dances a break-down. Why wasn't I taught to dance break-downs?'"

Here once more, doubtless, the girl is unconsciously acting, and it is not till she has seen Macleod on his native heath, and among the clansmen to whom he is a demi-god, in a semi-feudal, almost semi-barbarous environment, that she is fully awakened to the reality. She sees no beauty or grandeur in the life to which his love destines her as remorselessly as if it were hate, and she finds that she cannot give up all that she has made herself in the world that seems to her great and worth winning. She begins to pull at the leash which

binds her, and when she gets back to London she breaks with Macleod. Then he ventures upon that wild, that mad scheme of luring her aboard his yacht, and carrying her off to the highlands to make her his wife against her will, but not, as he believes, against her love. "'You cannot go ashore, Gertrude,' he repeated. 'We have already left Erith. Gerty, Gerty,' he continued, for she was struck dumb with a sudden terror, 'don't you understand now? I have stolen you away from yourself. There was but the one thing left; the one way of saving you. And you will forgive me, Gerty, when you understand it all——' She was gradually recovering from her terror. She did understand it now. And he was not ill at all. 'Oh, you coward! you coward! you coward!' she exclaimed, with a blaze of fury in her eyes. 'And I was to confer a kindness on you—a last kindness! But you dare not do this thing! I tell you, you dare not do it! I demand to be put on shore at once! Do you hear me?' She turned wildly round as if to seek for some way of escape. The door of the ladies' cabin stood open; the daylight was streaming down into that cheerful little place; there were some flowers on the dressing-table. But the way by which she had descended was barred over and dark. She faced him again, and her eyes were full of fierce indignation and anger; she drew herself up to her full height; she overwhelmed him with taunts, and reproaches, and scorn. That was a splendid piece of acting seeing that it had never been rehearsed. He stood unmoved before all this theatrical rage. 'Oh, yes, you were proud of your name,' she was saying, with bitter emphasis: 'and I thought you belonged to a race of gentlemen, to whom lying was unknown. And you were no longer murderous and revengeful; but you can take your revenge on a woman, for all that! And you ask me to come and see you because you are

ill. And you have laid a trap—like a coward!' 'And if I am what you say, Gerty,' said he, quite gently, 'it is the love of you that has made me that. Oh, you do not know!' She saw nothing of the lines that pain had written on this man's face, she recognized nothing of the very majesty of grief in the hopeless eyes. He was only her jailer, her enemy. 'Of course—of course,' said she. 'It is the woman—it is always the woman who is in fault! That is a manly thing, to put the blame on the woman! And it is a manly thing to take your revenge on a woman! I thought, when a man had a rival, that it was his rival whom he sought out. But you—you kept out of the way——' He strode forward and caught her by the wrist. There was a look in his face that for a second terrified her into silence. 'Gerty,' said he. 'I warn you! Do not mention that man to me—now or at any time; or it will be bad for him and you!' She twisted her hand from his grasp. 'How dare you come near me!' she cried."

As is well known the yacht is wrecked, and they are drowned together; and there is an implication that somehow Macleod is a fine fellow, and that Gertrude White is not a good girl, and has met a merited fate. But I do not know why she is not a good girl. The charge against her, so far as it is made out, is brought by her sister Carry who accuses her of flirting with Macleod. She certainly did nothing to prevent his loving her, no doubt because she was in love with him; but when she found that his love demanded more of her than she could give, she did nothing worse than try to break her engagement. Under the circumstances that was the best thing to do, and if she wished to break it gently and not roughly, that was not proof of a bad heart in her, but a good one. She had the histrionic nature, but that is not necessarily an insincere nature, though it means the dangerous power of self-deception. Im-

aginably the subjective process of Gertrude White's tragedy was the capacity of being charmed by what was new and picturesque in Macleod, and of not being sufficiently repelled by his latent race-savagery, which she latently feared. She could figure the world and the mimic-world well lost for love with him on the barren crag to which he invited her at the cost of all she had hitherto held dear; but when she saw the barren crag she would over-realize the immense sacrifice demanded of her, and her recoil would be the imperative mandate of what was the law of her being. She could not change that law, which was not an evil law, though it set the artist instinct against the woman instinct; and the lesson of her experience is not that you must not be an artist if you are a woman, but that if you are a man in love with that kind of woman, you must count upon her duplex instinct, which is by no means duplicity. If you offer her the fulfilment of one instinct, you must leave her to fulfil the other, and to demand its extirpation is stupid as well as cruel.

Macleod of Dare was both stupid and cruel, though he was so fine, and generous, and brave. If we consider the story of his love tragedy as something that simply happened through the war of his temperament with that of the woman he loved, then it is a great tragedy, of the quality of the Greek destiny play; but if we regard it as a morality, it is weak and foolish unless it teaches that Macleod was wrong and Gertrude was right. It is enough for a man to ask that a woman shall merge her woman life in his, and more than most men can fully justify in marriage, but that she shall lose her artist life too is asking something monstrous. Whenever they talk of this sacrifice which Macleod requires the girl tries tenderly to make him understand how vital the sacrifice is, but she cannot. He remains the true, simple, masterful soul who thinks he is asking

something wholly fit and proper for a husband to ask.

We have no hint of the author's feeling except so far as it may appear in his obvious fondness for Macleod, and his willingness to depreciate Gertrude White. He does not weaken so far as to use Thackeray's ironical method with her, though he applies it now and then to her sarcastic little sister; but he loses the greater opportunity in the less when he rejects the subjective for the objective tragedy. It wrings the reader's heart to have the heroine die with her lover; but it would be better than heart-break for him if he could realize her living with the husband for whom she had given up too much. That would set him thinking, and though a reader does not like to think, it is often the best thing he can do. To feel is comparatively cheap and easy.

## MR. BRET HARTE'S MIGGLES, AND MR. T. B. ALDRICH'S MARJORIE DAW

SO far in these explorations of Anglo-Saxon fiction, we have come upon only three American novelists, apparently, whose heroines may match with those of the English novelists. Such a fact may be accounted for upon a theory wounding to our patriotism, if we like the pain, or it may be more gratifyingly explained upon the ground that during the past century the English novelists have probably outnumbered ours quite in the proportion of their representation here. Besides, the heroine is a flower of slow growth, which thrives best in a tempered air, and a soil mellowed by long cultivation. Our heroines, compared with the English, are wilding off-shoots, of a sylvan sweetness and grace and a fresh loveliness, at their best, and at their second-best such as actual women are, much too good for men, no doubt, but not such as are easily gathered in this sort of florist's window. They are scattered widely in a thousand short stories, all over the north, east, south, and west, and the research that would give a just notion of their quantitative fascination would form a complete study of that branch of our fiction.

### I

The difficulty of presenting the short-story heroine will be realized by the faithful reader of Miss Sarah O.

Jewett's exquisite tales and sketches, to name a single and supreme example. In the case of the more objective heroines of such a writer as Bret Harte, one recalls out of the whole number of his more conventionalized types, his Miggles, who belongs rather with the edifying Magdalenes of the mining communities than with the sinuous and ophidian group of his politer ladies, too recognizably descended from the heroines of Charles Reade. Neither sort forms the forte of a writer who stamped his peculiar literary personality upon the fancy of his generation so vigorously, and who still keeps so large a public faithful to him. He is at his strongest with his men, and of his two kinds of women his Miggles seems, at least in this retrospect, his prime invention.

It will be remembered by my elder readers, at least, how the storm-bound passengers of Yuba Bill's mountain stage take refuge in her wayside cabin, during her absence, and before her return have a dull quarter of an hour there in the company of the speechless paralytic, to whom Miggles is dedicating the afternoon of her life because he has helped her pass the forenoon more gaily if not so exemplarily, and has, as she says in her brief explanation, "spent a heap of money on her."

"Bill had scarcely ceased growling before we heard a quick step upon the porch, the trailing of a wet skirt, the door was flung open, and with a flash of white teeth, a sparkle of dark eyes, and an utter absence of ceremony or diffidence, a young woman entered, shut the door, and, panting, leaned back against it. 'Oh, if you please, I'm Miggles!' And this was Miggles! this bright-eyed, full-throated young woman, whose wet gown of coarse blue stuff could not hide the beauty of the feminine curves to which it clung; from the chestnut crown of whose head, topped by a man's oil-

"'OH, IF YOU PLEASE, I'M MIGGLES'"

skin sou'-wester, to the little feet and ankles, hidden somewhere in the recesses of her boy's brogans, all was grace;—this was Miggles, laughing at us, too, in the most airy, frank, off-hand manner imaginable. 'You see, boys,' said she, quite out of breath, and holding one little hand against her side, quite unheeding the speechless discomfiture of our party, or the complete demoralization of Yuba Bill, whose features had relaxed into an expression of gratuitous and imbecile cheerfulness,—'you see, boys, I was mor'n two miles away when you passed down the road. I thought you might pull up here, and so I ran the whole way, knowing nobody was home but Jim,—and—and—I'm out of breath—and—that lets me out.' And here Miggles caught her dripping oil-skin hat from her head, with a mischievous swirl that scattered a shower of rain-drops over us; attempted to put back her hair; dropped two hair-pins in the attempt; laughed, and sat down beside Yuba Bill, with her hands crossed lightly on her lap. The Judge recovered himself first, and essayed an extravagant compliment. 'I'll trouble you for that hair-pin,' said Miggles, gravely. Half a dozen hands were eagerly stretched forward; the missing hair-pin was restored to its fair owner; and Miggles, crossing the room, looked keenly in the face of the invalid. The solemn eyes looked back at hers with an expression we had never seen before. Life and intelligence seemed to struggle back into the rugged face. Miggles laughed again,—it was a singularly eloquent laugh,—and turned her black eyes and white teeth once more towards us. 'This afflicted person is'—hesitated the Judge. 'Jim!' said Miggles. 'Your father?' 'No.' 'Brother?' 'No.' 'Husband?' Miggles darted a quick, half-defiant glance at the two lady passengers, who I had noticed did not participate in the general masculine admiration of Miggles, and said, gravely, 'No; it's Jim.'

There was an awkward pause. The lady passengers moved closer to each other; the Washoe husband looked abstractedly at the fire; and the tall man apparently turned his eyes inward for self-support at this emergency. But Miggles's laugh, which was very infectious, broke the silence. 'Come,' she said, briskly, 'you must be hungry. Who'll bear a hand to help me get tea?' "

The literary epoch of Miggles is early traceable in certain little touches. She is of that romanticistic generation which Mr. Harte himself has never outlived, and which we would hardly have him outlive. In her time good criminals abounded, and ladies with pasts were of a present behavior so self-devoted that they could often put their unerring sisters to the blush. They are rarer, now, and even on the stage their histories seem rather more to characterize them; but one likes to believe that there are Miggleses in the world, and life is often so illogical that it is not impossible.

It is a case which we have to suppose, but we cannot complain of the terms in which Mr. Harte asks us to suppose it. They are amusing and they are touching, and according to the simple ethics of the period, they are even improving. When it comes time for Miggles's involuntary and unexpected guests to seek such rest as they may find under her roof, she shows the ladies into the one other room, which imaginably their propriety makes too hot for their hostess. At any rate she soon reappears in the midst of an animated debate concerning her history among the men.

"But not, apparently, the same Miggles who a few hours before had flashed upon us. Her eyes were downcast, and as she hesitated for a moment on the threshold with a blanket on her arm, she seemed to have left behind her the frank fearlessness which had charmed us a moment before. Coming into the room, she drew a low stool beside the paralytic's chair, sat down, drew

the blanket over her shoulders, and saying, 'If it's all the same to you, boys, as we're rather crowded, I'll stop here to-night,' took the invalid's withered hand in her own, and turned her eyes upon the dying fire. An instinctive feeling that this was only premonitory to more confidential relations, and perhaps some shame at our previous curiosity, kept us silent. The rain still beat upon the roof, wandering gusts of wind stirred the embers into momentary brightness, until, in a lull of the elements, Miggles suddenly lifted up her head, and, throwing her hair over her shoulder, turned her face upon the group and asked, 'Is there any of you that knows me?' There was no reply. 'Think again! I lived at Marysville in '53. Everybody knew me there, and everybody had the right to know me. I kept the Polka Saloon until I came to live with Jim. That's six years ago. Perhaps I've changed some.' The absence of recognition may have disconcerted her. She turned her head to the fire again, and it was some seconds before she again spoke, and then more rapidly: 'Well, you see I thought some of you must have known me. There's no great harm done, any way. What I was going to say was this: Jim here'—she took his hand in both of hers as she spoke—'used to know me, if you didn't, and spent a heap of money upon me. I reckon he spent all he had. And one day—it's six years ago this winter—Jim came into my back room, sat down on my sofy, like as you see him in that chair, and never moved again without help. He was struck all of a heap, and never seemed to know what ailed him. The doctors came and said as how it was caused all along of his way of life,—for Jim was mighty free and wild like,—and that he would never get better, and couldn't last long any way. They advised me to send him to Frisco to the hospital, for he was no good to any one and would be a baby all his life. Perhaps it was

something in Jim's eye, perhaps it was that I never had a baby, but I said "No." I was rich then, for I was popular with everybody,—gentlemen like yourself, sir, came to see me,—and I sold out my business and bought this yer place, because it was sort of out of the way of travel, you see, and I brought my baby here.' With a woman's intuitive tact and poetry, she had, as she spoke, slowly shifted her position so as to bring the mute figure of the ruined man between her and her audience, hiding in the shadow behind it, as if she offered it as a tacit apology for her actions. . . . Hidden in the darkness, but still holding his hand, she went on: . . . 'The folks about here are very kind,' said Miggles, after a pause, coming a little into the light again. 'The men from the fork used to hang around here, until they found they wasn't wanted, and the women are kind,—and don't call. . . . And Jim here,' said Miggles, with her old laugh again, and coming quite out into the firelight, 'Jim—why, boys, you would admire to see how much he knows for a man like him. Sometimes I bring him flowers, and he looks at 'em just as natural as if he knew 'em; and times, when we're sitting alone, I read him those things on the wall. Why, Lord!' said Miggles, with her frank laugh, 'I've read him that whole side of the house this winter. There never was such a man for reading as Jim.' 'Why,' asked the Judge, 'do you not marry this man to whom you have devoted your youthful life?' 'Well, you see,' said Miggles, 'it would be playing it rather low down on Jim to take advantage of his being so helpless. And then, too, if we were man and wife, now, we'd both know that I was *bound* to do what I do now of my own accord.' 'But you are young yet and attractive.' 'It's getting late,' said Miggles, gravely, 'and you'd better all turn in. Good-night, boys;' and throwing the blanket over

her head, Miggles laid herself down beside Jim's chair, her head pillowed on the low stool that held his feet, and spoke no more. The fire slowly faded from the hearth; we each sought our blankets in silence; and presently there was no sound in the long room but the pattering of the rain upon the roof, and the heavy breathing of the sleepers."

## II

Of course, in a certain way, no heroine has ever been. The whole entrancing race exists only by an agreement between author and reader; and if the personality imagined is pleasing the author may make his own terms with the reader. But he had better not push the reader too far; the reader's credulity is great, but it is possible to exhaust it, and for that reason, many heroines of the past, who were impossibly or exorbitantly conditioned, have ceased to be. They were of a fashion, or of a mood of feeling, and the fashion or the mood has changed. Once we accepted such heroines as Miggles because they were the fashion, but now we can accept them no longer because they are not the fashion. The great matter for the author who will have his heroine last in the reader's fancy is to condition her so that to any mood she shall be easily imaginable, and one has not to recur to some outworn humor in order to imagine her. Then he may tell us what he will of her; he may say not only that she no longer lives, but that she never lived; still, we rehabilitate her and she lives on.

Mr. T. B. Aldrich went to this length in the case of his Marjorie Daw. She, so far as I know, is the only heroine in the whole range of fiction who perishes under the hand of her creator; yet she does not pass, but continues vividly present in the reader's consciousness.

The first effect of the brilliant sketch in which she has her being is that of irreparable loss, but this is not the last effect; one has a personal grief in learning that Marjorie Daw never existed save in the fancy of the fancied narrator; she does not survive in that tacit make-believe of author and reader which is the convention of fiction; she is destroyed, yet she persists, and haunts the memory with an immortal loveliness.

"Sometimes in the morning, and oftener in the afternoon, when the sun has withdrawn from that part of the mansion a young woman appears on the piazza with some Penelope web of embroidery in her hand, or a book. There is a hammock over there—of pineapple fibre, it looks from here. A hammock is very becoming when one is eighteen, and has golden hair, and dark eyes, and an emerald-colored illusion dress looped up after the fashion of a Dresden china shepherdess, and is *chaussée* like a belle of the time of Louis Quatorze. All this splendor goes into that hammock and sways there like a pond-lily in the golden afternoon."

The girl is invented, it will be remembered, out of the air, to amuse the intolerable leisure of a young fellow laid up with a broken leg, and the friend who invents her becomes gradually so interested in her characterization and the sick man's infatuation with her that he constructs a personality quite as appreciable to the reader. She swings in the hammock and reads; she plays croquet; she listens sympathetically to her friend's accounts of the invalid; she surprises herself in a dawning passion for the sufferer; and then she is locked up by her irascible old father. It is at this point that John Fleming, having impatiently reduced the correspondence with Edward Delaney from letters to telegrams, bursts all restraints, and flies to the supposed habitat of the heroine, to find that there is no such heroine, no

such house, and no such hammock, as Edward Delaney's too creative powers have invented.

It is a bewitching little romance, almost of the miniature dimensions of a conceit, but it is as filling to the reader as most long novels, and is of an abiding flavor piquant beyond that of any but a very few. In fact, Marjorie Daw, who, by the remorseful confession of her supposed inventor, has never lived, has outlived myriads of heroines whose reality has never been impeached by their authors.

## MR. G. W. CABLE'S AURORA AND CLOTILDE NANCANOU

THE heroines of Mr. Cable's admirable novel, "The Grandissimes," could be proved, at least to the satisfaction of their present elderly adorer, easily first among the imaginary ladies with whose sweetness novelists have enriched and enlarged our acquaintance. But I should feel that I had neglected a prior claim if, before speaking of them, I did not pay my duty to the type of heroine who illumines with her pale, wild-rose beauty the sylvan scenes of Miss Murfree's mountain stories, and who was fully developed while the pseudonym of Charles Egbert Craddock still veiled the identity of the author. It is a type varied according to circumstance, into this character and that, but primarily a type and not a character, and so no doubt more responsive to the social and personal facts from which it was evolved; a sad, shy, almost elusive presence in the savage rudeness of the environment. Sometimes a daughter, sometimes a young wife, sometimes a sweetheart, this heroine is always the same temperamentally, with a sort of martyr-grace and angelic innocence that touch the heart to pity rather than passion, and keep the memory constant to an ideal of womanhood as true and beautiful as any conceived in fiction. Whatever the fortune of the author's work shall be, no critic can hereafter recur to the art of her time and not feel the importance of her contribution to it in this type, if in nothing else. After the conditions shall have long

passed away it will remain to testify of the conditions, for it could have been possible only in them, and could have evolved its wistful loveliness only among their contrasts.

## I

I am not going to urge the right of Mr. Cable to lead the Southern writers who have done such notable work in fiction since the Civil War. There may very well be two opinions as to that, and it is quite sufficient for my purpose here that the reader should agree with me concerning the positive excellence of "The Grandissimes." That seems to me one of the few American fictions which one can think of without feeling the need of forbearance; or without wishing, in the interest of common honesty, strongly to qualify one's praises of it. Ample, yet shapely, picturesque in time and place, but essentially faithful to the facts of both, romantic in character but realistic in characterization, it abounds in varieties and contrasts of life mellowed but not blurred in the past to which they are attributed. Without accusing the author of slighting any of the rich possibilities of such an historic moment as that of the cession of Louisiana to the United States by France, and the union of the old province with the new nation against the prejudices of nearly all the native population, one may note that the political situation is subordinated to the social and personal interests, and the dark presence of slavery itself is perceptible not in any studied attitude, but in the casual effects of character among the Creole masters and the Creole slaves.

It is well known that the author's presentation of this character dissatisfied (to use a word of negative import for the expression of a positive resentment) the descendants of the Creole masters at least, who fancied their

race caricatured in the picture. But the fact only testified to the outside spectator of the extreme difficulty, the impossibility, indeed, of satisfying any people with any portraiture by an alien hand. To such a spectator Mr. Cable's studies of Creole character in his New Orleans of the early nineteenth century seem affectionately, almost fondly, appreciative, and they convince of their justice by that internal evidence which it is as hard to corroborate as to overthrow. No dearer or delightfuller figures have been presented by the observer of an alien race and religion than Mr. Cable has offered in Aurora and Clotilde Nancanou, and in none does the artist seem to have penetrated more sympathetically the civilization, so unlike his own, which animated them with a witchery so diverse yet so equal. Without blaming his Creole critics, one wonders what would have satisfied them if they are not content with the vivid and lawless caprice of Aurora, the demure, conscientious, protesting fascination of Clotilde.

In this mother and daughter the parental and filial relations are inverted with courageous fidelity to life, where we as often see a judicious daughter holding an impulsive mother in check as the reverse. Clotilde is always shocked and troubled by her mother's wilful rashness, and Aurora, who is not so very much her senior, is always breaking bounds with a girlish impetuosity, which is only aggravated by the attempt to restrain it. These lovely ladies, who are in their way ladies to their finger-tips, and are as gentle in breeding as they are simple in circumstance, shine to each other's advantage in the situations which contrast them; and it is in such situations that they are mostly seen. One such situation fixed itself in my mind at a first reading, and has remained there unfaded during the twenty years that have since elapsed, though I will not deny

that I have several times refreshed my original sense of it. The reader who knows the book will not have forgotten the passage descriptive of Sieur Frowenfeld's call upon the ladies in their little house, when Clotilde and he try to ignore their unspoken love for each other in a sober discussion of the Creole's peculiarities, and Aurora, from whom their passion is of course less hidden than from themselves, dashes irrelevantly into the conversation from time to time, and turns the train of Frowenfeld's ideas topsy-turvy. It is all done with a delicacy, a gracious tenderness, enhanced by the author's sensitive rendering of the Creole ladies' accents in the English which they employ with the English-speaking young German pharmacist; but one despairs in quoting it, knowing that the quaint beauty of the characterization can be only suggested in such a fragment.

"The ladies were at home. Aurora herself opened the door, and Clotilde came forward from the bright fire-place with a cordiality never before so unqualified. There was something about these ladies—in their simple but noble grace, in their half-Gallic, half-classic beauty, in a jocund buoyancy mated to an amiable dignity—that made them appear to the scholar as though they had just bounded into life from the garlanded procession of some old fresco. The resemblance was not a little helped on by the costume of the late Revolution (most acceptably chastened and belated by the distance from Paris). Their black hair, somewhat heavier on Clotilde's head, where it rippled once or twice, was knotted *en Grecque*, and adorned only with the spoils of a nosegay given to Clotilde by a chivalric small boy in the home of her music scholar. 'We was expectin' you since several days,' said Clotilde, as the three sat down before the fire, Frowenfeld in a cushioned chair whose moth-holes had been care-

fully darned. . . . And, a few moments later, the apothecary and both ladies (the one as fond of the abstract as the other two were ignorant of the concrete) were engaged in an animated, running discussion on art, society, climate, education. . . . Frowenfeld had never before spent such an hour. At its expiration he had so well held his own against both the others that the three had settled down to this sort of entertainment: Aurora would make an assertion, or Clotilde would ask a question; and Frowenfeld would present his opinions without the thought of a reservation either in himself or his hearers. On their part, they would sit in deep attention, shielding their faces from the fire, and responding to enunciations directly contrary to their convictions with an occasional 'yes-seh,' or 'ceddenly,' or 'of coze,' or—prettier affirmation still—a solemn drooping of the eyelids, a slight compression of the lips, and a low, slow declination of the head. 'The bane of all Creole art-effort'—(we take up the apothecary's words at a point where Clotilde was leaning forward and slightly frowning in an honest attempt to comprehend his condensed English)—'the bane of all Creole art-effort, so far as I have seen it, is amateurism.' 'Amateu—' murmured Clotilde, a little beclouded on the main word and distracted by a French difference of meaning, but planting an elbow on one knee in the genuineness of her attention, and responding with a bow. . . . 'That is to say,' said Frowenfeld, apologizing for the homeliness of his further explanation by a smile, 'a kind of ambitious indolence that lays very large eggs, but can neither see the necessity for building a nest beforehand, nor command the patience to hatch the eggs afterward.' 'Of coze,' said Aurora. 'It is a great pity,' said the sermonizer, looking at the face of Clotilde, elongated in the brass andiron, and, after a pause: 'Nothing on earth can take the place

"I THING LOUISIANA IS A PARADIZE—ME!' SAID AURORA"

of hard and patient labor. But that, in this community, is not esteemed; most sorts of it are contemned; the humbler sorts are despised, and the higher are regarded with mingled patronage and commiseration.' . . . 'Doze Creole' is *lezzy*,' said Aurora. 'That is a hard word to apply to those who do not *consciously* deserve it,' said Frowenfeld; 'but if they could only wake up to the fact—find it out themselves—' 'Ceddenly,' said Clotilde. ''Sieur Frowenfel',' said Aurora, leaning her hand on her side, 'some pipple thing it is doze climade; 'ow you lag doze climade?' 'I do not suppose,' replied the visitor, 'there is a more delightful climate in the world.' 'Ah-h-h!'—both ladies at once, in a low, gracious tone of acknowledgment. 'I thing Louisiana is a paradize—me!' said Aurora. 'W'ere you goin' fin' sudge a h-air?' She respired a sample of it. 'W'ere you goin' fin' sudge a so ridge groun'? De weed' in my bag yard is twenny-five feet 'igh!' 'Ah! maman!' 'Twenty-six!' said Aurora, correcting herself. . . . 'Yes,' he said, breaking a contemplative pause, 'the climate is too comfortable and the soil *too* rich, —though I do not think it is entirely on their account that the people who enjoy them are so sadly in arrears to the civilized world.' He blushed with the fear that his talk was bookish, and felt grateful to Clotilde for seeming to understand his speech. 'W'ad you fin' de rizzon is, 'Sieur Frowenfel'?' she asked. 'I do not wish to philosophize,' he answered. '*Mais*, go hon.' '*Mais*, go ahade,' said both ladies, settling themselves. 'It is largely owing,' exclaimed Frowenfeld, with sudden fervor, 'to a defective organization of society, which keeps this community, and will continue to keep it for an indefinite time to come, entirely unprepared and disinclined to follow the course of modern thought.' 'Of coze,' murmured

Aurora, who had lost her bearings almost at the first word."

II

It may very justly be urged that this is not drama; and very often in the illustrative passages I have given in this series of studies I have felt that they did not represent the heroines in those lime-lighted moments in which a heroine is supposed most to live. One has to choose between such moments and some quieter episode in which character softly unfolds itself, and its fascination penetrates like a perfume to the reader's sympathy while his more tumultuous sensations are left unstirred. Then, one has one's conscience as to the quality of the whole work in which the character is rooted, and of which it is the consummate flower. One must somehow do justice to that; and in reading Mr. Cable's novel one is afraid that nothing short of entreating the reader to go to it and do it justice himself will suffice. Not to make this beggarly default, however, one may remind him of the opalescent shimmer in which the story is wrapped, and from which keenly sparkle its facts and traits of comedy and tragedy. For a certain blend of romance and reality, which does no wrong to either component property, I do not know its like in American fiction, and I feel that this is saying far too little; I might say in all fiction, and not accuse myself of extravagance. Short of this I may safely declare it the author's masterpiece, on which he has lavished his happiest if not his most conscious art; and Aurora Nancanou is its supreme grace. What she is otherwise will not be readily put into words, even her own words. She is always the wild, wilful heart of girlhood, which the experiences of wifehood, motherhood, and widowhood have left unchanged. She is a

woman with a grown-up daughter, but essentially she is her daughter's junior, and, adorable as Clotilde is in her way, she pales and dulls into commonplace when Aurora is by.

That last chapter, which is so apt to be an anti-climax in a novel, is so good in "The Grandissimes," and is so subtly interpretative of Aurora's personality—the sort of personality which coquettes with itself to the very end—that I should like to give it entire, though I know that I should have still a haunting fear that without everything that had gone before the portrait of this bewitching creature would want its full effect. Honoré Grandissime, who has loved her through all the involutions of her caprice, has offered himself and been refused, and a scene follows which, among love scenes, has to my knowledge scarcely been surpassed in its delicious naturalness.

"If M. Grandissime had believed that he was prepared for the supreme bitterness of that moment, he had sadly erred. He could not speak. He extended his hand in a dumb farewell, when, all unsanctioned by his will, the voice of despair escaped him in a low groan. At the same moment, a tinkling sound drew near, and the room, which had grown dark with the fall of night, began to brighten with the softly widening light of an evening lamp, as a servant approached to place it in the front drawing-room. Aurora gave her hand and withdrew it. In the act the two somewhat changed position, and the rays of the lamp, as the maid passed the door, falling upon Aurora's face, betrayed the again upturned eyes. 'Sieur Grandissime—' They fell. The lover paused. 'You thing I'm crool.' She was the statue of meekness. 'Hope has been cruel to me,' replied M. Grandissime, 'not you; that I cannot say. Adieu.' He was turning. 'Sieur Grandissime—' She seemed to tremble. He stood still.

'Sieur Grandissime,'—her voice was very tender,—'wad you' horry?' There was a great silence. 'Sieur Grandissime, you know—teg a chair.' He hesitated a moment and then both sat down. The servant repassed the door; yet when Aurora broke the silence, she spoke in English—having such hazardous things to say. It would conceal possible stammerings. 'Sieur Grandissime—you know dad riz'n I—' She slightly opened her fan, looking down upon it, and was still. 'I have no right to ask the reason,' said M. Grandissime. 'It is yours—not mine.' Her head went lower. 'Well, you know,'—she drooped it meditatively to one side, with her eyes on the floor,—''tis bick-ause—'tis bick-ause I thing in a few days I'm goin' to die.' M. Grandissime said never a word. He was not alarmed. She looked up suddenly and took a quick breath, as if to resume, but her eyes fell before his, and she said, in a tone of half-soliloquy: 'I 'ave so mudge troub' wit dad hawt.' She lifted one little hand feebly to the cardiac region, and sighed softly, with a dying languor. M. Grandissime gave no response. A vehicle rumbled by in the street below, and passed away. At the bottom of the room, where a gilded Mars was driving into battle, a soft note told the half-hour. The lady spoke again. 'Id mague'—she sighed once more—'so strange,—sometime' I thing I'm git'n' crezzy.' Still he to whom these fearful disclosures were being made remained as silent and motionless as an Indian captive, and, after another pause, with its painful accompaniment of small sounds, the fair speaker resumed with more energy, as befitting the approach to an incredible climax: 'Some day, 'Sieur Grandissime,—id mague me fo'gid my hage! I thing I'm young!' She lifted her eyes with the evident determination to meet his own squarely, but it was too much; they fell as before; yet she went on speaking: 'An' w'en some-

boddie git'n' ti'ed livin' wid 'imsev an' big'n' to fill ole, an' wan' someboddie to teg de care of 'im an' wan' me to gid marri'd wid 'im—I thing 'e's in love to me.' Her fingers kept up a little shuffling with the fan. 'I thing I'm crezzy. I thing I muz be go'n' to die torecklie.' She looked up to the ceiling with large eyes, and then again at the fan in her lap, which continued its spreading and shutting. 'An' daz de riz'n, 'Sieur Grandissime.' She waited until it was certain he was about to answer, and then interrupted him nervously: 'You know, 'Sieur Grandissime, id woon be righd! Id woon be de juztiz to *you!* An' you de bez man I evva know in my life, 'Sieur Grandissime!' Her hands shook. 'A man w'at nevva wan' to gid marri'd wid noboddie in 'is life, and now trine to gid marri'd juz only to ripose de soul of 'is oncl'—' M. Grandissime uttered an exclamation of protest, and she ceased. 'I asked you,' continued he, with low-toned emphasis, 'for the single and only reason that I want you for my wife.' 'Yez,' she quickly replied; 'daz all. Daz wad I thing. An' I thing daz de rad weh to say, 'Sieur Grandissime. Bick-ause, you know, you an' me is too hole to talg aboud dad *lovin'*, you know. An' you godd dad grade *rizpeg* fo' me, an' me I godd dad 'ighez rispeg fo' you; bud—' she clutched the fan and her face sank lower still—'bud—' she swallowed—shook her head—'bud—' She bit her lip; she could not go on. 'Aurora,' said her lover, bending forward and taking one of her hands. 'I *do* love you with all my soul.' She made a poor attempt to withdraw her hand, abandoned the effort, and looked up savagely through a pair of overflowing eyes, demanding: '*Mais*, fo' w'y you di'n' wan' to sesso?' M. Grandissime smiled argumentatively. 'I have said so a hundred times, in every way but in words.' She lifted her head proudly, and bowed like a queen. '*Mais*, you see, 'Sieur Gran-

ou bin meg one mizteg.' 'But 'tis corrected exclaimed he, with suppressed but eager joy- ''Sieur Grandissime,' she said with a tre- solemnity, 'I'm verrie sawrie, *mais*—you o lade.' 'No, no!' he cried, 'the correction es in time. Say that, lady; say that!' His ar- t gaze beat hers once more down; but she shook her d. e ignored the motion. 'And you will correct ur answer; ah! say that, too!' he insisted, covering captive hand w m his own, and leaning forward m his seat. '*Mais*, 'Sieur Grandissime, you know, d is so verrie unegspeg'.' 'Oh! unexpected!' '*Mais*, I was thing all dad time id was Clotilde wad you—' She turned her face away and buried her mouth in her handkerchief. 'Ah!' he cried, 'mock me no more, Aurore Nancanou!' He rose erect and held the hand firmly which she strove to draw away: 'Say the word, sweet lady; say the word!' She turned upon him suddenly, rose to her feet, was speechless an instant while her eyes flashed into his, and crying out: 'No!' burst into tears, laughed through them, and let him clasp her to his bosom."

## MR. H. B. FULLER'S JANE MARSHALL AND MISS M. E. WILKINS'S JANE FIELD

IN the fiction of that group of Western novelists whom I think the most representative, I feel the heroines generally so much less important than the heroes that I find myself in a difficulty which I will confess to the reader strictly upon the condition that it shall go no farther. I do this not only because I ought, but also because I must, for if I did not the reader would himself perceive that either I have been wrong in claiming the supremacy of the heroine in a novel as proof of the author's mastery, or else that these Western novelists whom I like are really not masterly. What is certain is that their heroines are subordinate figures; and there is no way out for me but possibly through the fact that the feminization of our American life, so apparent in and out of literature in the East, has not yet reached the new centres of population between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi, and that the Western subordination of the heroine is the instinctive response of fiction to the quantitative if not the qualitative fact. To the casual glance the West would seem, even more than the East, given up socially and intellectually to women; but so far women do not hold the first place in Western fiction. The type of Western womanhood studied in Selma, the heroine of Mr. Robert Grant's "Unleavened Bread," is the creation or invention of a Boston novelist, who in obedience to the Eastern tradition gives her supremacy in his story. To be sure Mr. Robert Herrick, in "The Gospel of Freedom," made a Western woman

the foremost figure in his story; but Mr. Herrick is of Bostonian birth like Mr. Grant, and though recently of Chicagoan adoption, is still imaginably of the earlier allegiance in his deference to the nearly and ever womanly Eastern fiction. In the work of a native Westerner like Mr. Will Paine, the womanly, though so truly portrayed in such a story as "The Money Captain," is subordinated in interest to the manly; and Mr. George Ade, whose brilliant divinations of feminine foible form the delightfulness of his "Stories and Fables," gives his highest energies or inspirations to the study of persons of his own sex, and Doc Horne and Artie and Pink Marsh are his masterpieces in characterization.

Mr. Hamlin Garland also is more memorable for his men than his women, and the critical Trailer (I am writing with the phraseology of his latest story insistently in mind) will find the Float of masculine character more abundant in his gold-bearing mountains than the surface indications of heroinism. In his earlier and shorter stories, and still in his shorter and later stories, you are aware of the manly sympathy which divines this precious metal; and the Rose who is the "Rose of Dutcher's Cooley" is a genuine piece of womanhood, with both the material and the spiritual *aurae* which form its allure. She is imagined with a courage uncommon in our fiction, and portrayed with a conscience unable to spare the suggestions of undraped nature which our tradition blinks. It is no longer, as it is not yet, the time for such courage and conscience; and we still await a due heroine from a novelist whose work otherwise avouches his power in dealing with character.

I

Among Western novelists we must go to the page of Mr. Henry B. Fuller, apparently more sensitive to

Eastern influences, or the Western advance of feminization, for a heroine of the fit proportions; and I think we find her in one of the chief figures of the story which is upon the whole the most representative of his native city. "With the Procession" has not the epical motive of "The Cliff-Dwellers"; but the epical motive always incurs the danger of turning mechanical, and "With the Procession" escapes this, while it studies, delicately but penetratingly, the evolution of Chicago from a large town to a great city, in the inner and outer life of a typical family which voluntarily and involuntarily prospers with it. The daughter of this family, who determines to make it share her own social consciousness, is a heroine of rare and even new kind. She begins properly to win the heart of the reader from the moment when in view of her evident want of beauty and style she humorously decides to be "quaint" and to work life upon the lines of that decision. Her "quaintness" is not an affectation, but is the frank recognition of her material limitations, and she is powerfully abetted in her resolution by another person of the drama who was a belle of an earlier period, but has become quaint inwardly, while appearing outwardly a figure of great social power and splendor. The management of these two delightful women is of the artistic sort which puts you in full possession of their quality without much advertising you of the process. This makes it difficult to give distinctive passages concerning them; but not impossible, and it is not without the hope of making my reader wish to know them better that I introduce them in the scene where they become fast friends.

Jane Marshall, the younger of the friends, has gone from her father's old-fashioned house to the new-fashioned palace of Mrs. Granger Bates to ask the social leader for a subscription in behalf of the working-girls'

club she is fostering; and after being snubbed and put down on general principles by the great lady, suddenly finds herself caught to her heart, when Mrs. Bates learns that she is the daughter of David Marshall; for David Marshall, far back in the fifties, was a favorite "beau" of Mrs. Bates's, and she still has an honest tenderness for him. She takes the odd girl to her heart in every way, and, leading her through the "marble halls" where she receives the world, she welcomes her to the little room where she lives.

"The door closed with a light click, and Jane looked about her with a great and sudden surprise. Poor, stupid, stumbling child!—she understood at last in what spirit she had been received and on what footing she had been placed. She found herself in a small, cramped, low-ceiled room which was filled with worn and antiquated furniture. There was a ponderous old mahogany bureau, with the veneering cracked and peeled, and a bed to correspond. There was a shabby little writing-desk, whose let-down lid was lined with faded and blotted green baize. On the floor there was an old Brussels carpet, antique as to pattern and wholly threadbare as to surface. The walls were covered with an old-time paper whose plaintive primitiveness ran in slender pink stripes alternating with narrow green vines. In one corner stood a small upright piano whose top was littered with loose sheets of old music, and on one wall hung a set of thin black-walnut shelves strung together with cords and loaded with a variety of well-worn volumes. In the grate was a coal fire. Mrs. Bates sat down on the foot of the bed and motioned Jane to a small rocker that had been re-seated with a bit of old rugging. . . . Mrs. Bates had stepped to her single little window. 'Isn't it a gem?' she asked. 'I had it made to order; one of the old-fashioned sort, you see—two sash, with six little panes in each. No weights

and cords, but simply catches at the side. It opens to just two widths; if I want anything different, I have to contrive it for myself. Sometimes I use a hair-brush and sometimes a paper-cutter.' . . . 'Do you like my posies?' She nodded towards the window, where, thanks to the hair-brush, a row of flowers in a long, narrow box blew about in the draught. 'Asters?' 'No, no, no! But I hoped you'd guess asters. They're chrysanthemums—you see, fashion will penetrate even here. But they're the smallest and simplest I could find. What do I care for orchids and American beauties, and all those other expensive things under glass? How much does it please me to have two great big formal beds of gladiolus and foliage plants in the front yard, one on each side of the steps? Still, with our position, I suppose it can't be helped. No; what I want is a bed of portulaca, and some cypress vines running up strings to the top of a pole. As soon as I get poor enough to afford it I'm going to have a lot of phlox and London pride and bachelor's buttons out there in the back-yard, and the girls can run their clothes lines somewhere else.' 'It's hard to keep flowers in a city,' said Jane. 'I know it is. At our old house we had such a nice little rose-bush in the front-yard. I hated so to leave it behind—one of those little yellow brier-roses. No, it wasn't yellow; it was just—"yaller." And it always scratched my nose when I tried to smell it. But oh, child'—wistfully—'if I could only smell it now!' 'Couldn't you have transplanted it?' asked Jane, sympathetically. 'I went back the very next day after we moved out, with a peach-basket and a fire-shovel. But my poor bush was buried under seven feet of yellow sand. To-day there's seven stories of brick and mortar. So all I've got from the old place is just this furniture of ma's and the wall-paper.' 'The wall-paper?' 'Not the identical same, of course. It's

like what I had in my bedroom when I was a girl. I remembered the pattern, and tried everywhere to match it. . . . And finally—' 'Well, what — finally?' 'Finally, I sent down East and had eight or ten rolls made to order. I chased harder than anybody ever chased for a Raphael, and I spent more than if I had hung the room with Gobelins; but—' She stroked the narrow strips of pink and green with a fond hand, and cast on Jane a look which pleaded indulgence. 'Isn't it just too quaintly ugly for anything?' 'It isn't any such thing,' cried Jane. 'It's just as sweet as it can be! I only wish mine was like it.' . . . Mrs. Bates began to rummage among the drawers of her old desk. 'There!' she said, presently, 'I knew I could put my hands on it.' She set a daguerreotype before Jane. Its oval was bordered with a narrow line of gilded metal and its small square back was covered with embossed brown leather. 'There, now! Do you know who that is?' Jane looked back and forth doubtfully between the picture and its owner. 'Is it—is it—pa?' Mrs. Bates nodded. Jane regarded the daguerreotype with a puzzled fascination. 'Did my father ever wear his hair all wavy across his forehead that way, and have such a thing tied around his throat, and wear a vest all covered with those little gold sprigs?' 'Precisely. That's just the way he looked the last time we danced together. And what do you suppose the dance was? Guess and guess and guess again! It was this.' Mrs. Bates whisked herself on to the piano-stool and began to play and to sing. Her touch was heavy and spirited, but her voice was easily audible above the instrument.

"'Old Dan Tucker, he got drunk;
He jumped in the fire and he kicked up a chunk
Of red-hot charcoal with his shoes.
Lordy! how the ashes flew-hoo!'

"Jane dropped the daguerreotype in time to take up the refrain:

"'Clear the road for old Dan Tucker!
You're too late to get your supper.
Clear the road for old Dan—'

'Aha! you know it!' cried Mrs. Bates, gayly. 'Of course,' responded Jane. 'My education may be modern, on the whole, but it hasn't neglected the classics completely! Gentlemen forward!' she said, with a sudden cry, which sent Mrs. Bates's fingers back to the keyboard; '*gentlemen* forward to Mister Tucker!' Mrs. Bates pounded loudly, and Jane pirouetted up to her from behind. '*Ladies* forward to Mister Tucker!' cried Jane, and Mrs. Bates left the stool and began dancing towards her. Then she danced back and took her seat again; but with the first chord: 'ALL forward to Miss Tucker!' called Jane again; and they met face to face in the middle of the room and burst out laughing. . . . 'Sit down; I'm going to play the "Java March" for you.' She struck out several ponderous and vengeful chords. 'Why,' called Jane, 'is that the "Java March"?' She spread out her elbows and stalked up and down singing:

"'Oh, the *Dutch* compa-*nee*
Is the *best* compa-*nee!*'

'Right again!' cried Mrs. Bates. 'You *are* one of us —just as I said!' 'Well, if that's the "Java March,"' said Jane, 'it's in an old book we used to have about the house years and years ago. Only, if you bring it up as an example of pa's taste—' 'He liked it because I played it, perhaps,' said Mrs. Bates quietly. 'Besides, why should you put it to those shocking words? It *is* in that book,' she continued, 'and I've got one here just like it.' 'Is it the one with "Roll on, Silver Moon,"

and "Wild roved the Indian Maid, Bright What's-her-name"?' 'Bright Alfarata. Same one, exactly. Bring up another chair, and we'll go through a whole programme of classics—pruggrum, I mean.' 'Let's see, though,' said Jane, looking at her watch. 'Mercy me! where has the morning gone? It's after eleven o'clock.' . . . Mrs. Bates opened the front door herself. 'You can take the choo-choo cars at Sixteenth, you know, and get off at Van Buren. Oh, dear; excuse my baby-talk; our little Reginald—two months old, you know.' . . . She accompanied Jane halfway down the steps, bareheaded as she was, and in her morning-gown. A society reporter who happened to be passing originated the rumor that she had gone insane."

If, after all, these passages are illustrative of Mrs. Bates rather than of Jane Marshall, it is perhaps because Jane Marshall is less susceptible of illustration by select passages. She is a singularly undramatic heroine, and lives in a sort of subjectivity more perceptible than demonstrable to the sympathetic reader's knowledge of her faithful and lovable character. In fact, the scene given displays only that surface of her character which is the least significant of her quality. It is her hard fate, through her zeal for her father's standing and her pride in him, to rend him and her mother from the ugly, old-fashioned keeping in which they were peacefully rusting out their lives, and get them into "the procession," and when her father falls out of it dying, she feels as if she had killed him. But she really has not; she has been the truest and kindest of all his children to him; and she has her reward when the faithful Theodore Brower, long mute with love for her, takes heart at the funeral to say that he will go as one of the family, and in the same carriage as her, or not go at all. The grotesqueness is not blinked, but

the pathos is delicately intimated in it; and, throughout the story, the blunt, angular, outright nature of the girl is studied with constant recognition of her sweetness and unselfish goodness, and her humorous self-depreciation. She is but one of many women in the story whose personalities are all rendered with an unerring touch.

## II

To pass from the atmosphere of Mr. Fuller's "With the Procession" to Miss Mary E. Wilkins's "Jane Field" is to make proof at once of the variety and the solidarity of American life. Nothing as to conditions could be farther apart than Chicago and Green River; and yet the vast, loud, lavish metropolis of the West, and the prim, meagre, niggard New England village are animated by the same ideal of conduct, the same Puritanized conscience, the same desire of justice and righteousness. The Chicago family in dealing with the problem of the iniquitous son and brother whose sin has followed him home from Europe is of as simple and direct an impulse as Jane Field in her self-denunciation to those she has deceived in her too ingenious endeavor for justice; and when it appears that money will serve quite as well as marriage, or better, they feel a noble shame in compounding the wrong of a like quality with Lois Field's sense of dishonor in silently witnessing her mother's trespass. It is in the Europeanized and modernized black sheep of the Chicago fold that the differentiation of ideal takes place; but his aberration from the home standard is as wide in his Chicago domestic circle as it would be in Green River.

The delight of the higher probability must remain with the Western novelist, who is realistic through and through, whereas the New England novelist is at heart

romantic, and realistic mainly in expression. She narrowly escapes the impossible in her plot, and saves herself from point to point in the story by clever devices and agile turns which tax the credulity of the reader rather than raise his admiration. They ask him to grant premises; but the true plot, the situation that reproduces life, compels him to grant them. Nevertheless, it is fairly possible, or if not that, it is unfairly possible, that Jane Field, seeing her frail young daughter dying before her eyes in a pitiless decline, as she believes, for want of rest from work and change of air, should bethink herself of the inheritance left her dead sister, and, cloudily keeping in mind her extraordinary resemblance to her sister, should suffer herself to be mistaken for her, and should try to enter into the enjoyment of her own rights through her sister's property. The reader of the story, so powerful in spite of its inherent weaknesses, will remember that her sister's husband has lost all her own little fortune in speculation, and that Jane Field has no purpose but to recover the value of her fifteen hundred dollars. It is with this purpose that she goes to Elliott, a hundred miles away from Green River, to seek her just dues from the estate which must, upon her sister's death being known, revert to the family of her sister's husband. The lawyer who has the property in charge greets Mrs. Field as Mrs. Maxwell, and in the sudden, crazy hope of turning his error to her account, without infringing the just rights of the loyal heirs, she does not correct him. It is her dim, unformulated notion that she may collect her dues, to the amount of the fifteen hundred dollars lost, from the income of the property, and then relinquish possession; but when her daughter follows her to Elliott and sets her pitiless young conscience in condemnation over the mother who has taken this desperate chance for her sake, Jane Field finds it impossible to

JANE FIELD AND THE LAWYER

touch a cent of her dues. They put everything by for the legal owners, and cower in the old Maxwell house, keeping themselves from starvation by the little that Lois can earn in sewing, till a visit from some old Green River neighbors deepens the stress of her sin upon Jane Field, and drives her to anticipate detection by denouncing herself to the whole village of Elliott. You can drive a coach through several places in this loose structure, but if you have no wish for such an excursion, you can enjoy the psychology of the tremendous situation, as it is worked out in the characters of the mother and daughter.

Lois first unexpectedly appears at Elliott the morning after her mother's arrival. They meet at the lawyer's office, where Jane Field is talking of the property with him, and she is obliged to introduce Lois as her niece, or rather to let the lawyer deceive himself as to their relation; she keeps as far as she can from positive deception; and then the mother and daughter go home to the Maxwell house together. . . . "Mrs. Field stalked ahead with her resolute stiffness; Lois followed after her, keeping always several paces behind. No matter how often Mrs. Field, sternly conscious of it, slackened her own pace, Lois never gained upon her. When they reached the gate at the entrance of the Maxwell grounds, and Mrs. Field stopped, Lois spoke up. 'What place is this?' said she, in a defiantly timorous voice. 'The Maxwell house,' replied her mother, shortly, turning up the walk. 'Are you going in here?' 'Of course I am.' 'Well, I ain't going in one step.' Mrs. Field turned and faced her. 'Lois,' said she, 'if you want to go away and desert the mother that's showin' herself willin' to die for you, you can.' Lois said not another word. She turned in at the gate, with her eyes fixed upon her mother's face. 'I'll tell you about it when we get up to the house,' said her mother, with

appealing conciliation. Lois slunk mutely behind her again. Her eyes were full of the impulse of flight when she watched her mother unlock the house door, but she followed her in. . . . 'Now, Lois,' said Mrs. Field, 'I'm goin' to tell you about this. . . . You know, I s'pose, that Mr. Tuxbury took me for your aunt Esther.' Lois nodded; her dilated eyes never wavered from her mother's face. 'I s'pose you heard what he was sayin' to me when you come in. Lois, I didn't tell him I was your aunt Esther. The minute I come in, he took me for her, an' Mis' Henry Maxwell come into his office, an' she did, an' so did Mr. Tuxbury's sister. I wa'n't goin' to tell them I wa'n't her. . . . An' I'll tell you why. I'm goin' to have that fifteen hundred dollars of your poor father's earnin's that I lent your uncle out of this property, an' this is all the way to do it, an' I'm goin' to do it.' . . . 'Couldn't you have asked the lawyer about the fifteen hundred dollars? Wouldn't he have given you some? O mother!' 'I was goin' to if he hadn't took me for her, but it wouldn't have done any good. They wouldn't have been obliged to pay it, an' folks ain't fond of payin' over money when they ain't obliged to. I'd been a fool to have asked him after he took me for her.' 'Then—you'd got this—all planned?' Her mother took her up sharply. 'No, I hadn't got it all planned,' said she. 'I don't deny it come into my head. I knew how much folks said I looked like Esther, but I didn't go so far as to plan it; there needn't anybody say I did.' 'You ain't going to take the money?' 'I'm goin' to take that fifteen hundred dollars out of it.' 'Mother, you ain't going to stay here, and make folks think you're Aunt Esther?' 'Yes, I am.' Then all Lois's horror and terror manifested themselves in one cry—'O mother!'"

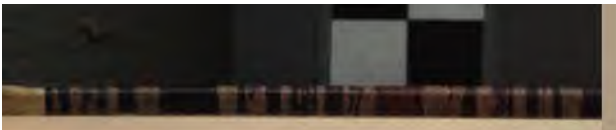
When the fierce sense of wrong subsides, and the iron purpose of righting herself breaks in Jane Field,

LOIS FIELD AND THE SCHOOL CHILDREN

her relentless will asserts itself again in the impulse to punish herself for the deceit she has practised, and to take the consequences of her transgression before all the world; and she begins with the three old Green River neighbors who are visiting her.

"When Lois left home that afternoon her mother had been in her bedroom changing her dress. When she came out she had on her best black dress, her black shawl and gloves, and her best bonnet. The three women stared at her. She stood before them a second without speaking. The strange look, for which Lois had watched her face, had appeared. 'Why, what is the matter, Mis' Field?' cried Mrs. Babcock. 'Where be you goin'?' 'I'm goin' out a little ways,' replied Mrs. Field. Then she raised her voice suddenly. 'I've got something to say to all of you before I go,' said she. 'I've been deceivin' you, and everybody here in Elliott. When I came down here, they all took me for my sister, Esther Maxwell, and I let them think so. They've all called me Esther Maxwell here. That's how I got the money. Old Mr. Maxwell left it to Flora Maxwell if my sister didn't outlive him. I shouldn't have had a cent. I stole it. I thought my daughter would die if she didn't have it an' get away from Green River; but that wa'n't any excuse. Edward Maxwell had that fifteen hundred dollars of my husband's, an' I never had a cent of it; but that wa'n't any excuse. I thought I'd jest stay here an' carry it out till I got the money back; but that wa'n't any excuse. I ain't spent a cent of the money; it's all put away just as it was paid in, in a sugar-bowl in the china closet; but that ain't any excuse. I took it on myself to do justice instead of the Lord, an' that ain't for any human bein' to do. I ain't Esther Maxwell. I'm brought up short. I ain't Esther Maxwell!' Her voice rose to a stern shriek. The three women stared at her, then at each other. Their faces

were white. Amanda was catching her breath in faint gasps. Jane Field rushed out of the room. The door closed heavily after her. Three wild, pale faces huddled together in a window watched her out of the yard. Mrs. Babcock called weakly after her to come back, but she kept on. She went out of the yard and down the street. At the first house she stopped, went up to the door and rang the bell. When a woman answered her ring, she looked at her and said, 'I ain't Esther Maxwell!' Then she turned and went down the walk between the rows of marigolds and asters, and the woman stood staring after her for a minute, then ran in, and the windows filled with wondering faces. Jane Field stopped at the next house with the same message. After she left a woman pelted across the yard in a panic to compare notes with her neighbors. She kept on down the street, and she stopped at every door and said, 'I ain't Esther Maxwell.' Now and then somebody tried to delay her to question her and obtain an explanation, but she broke away. There was about her a terrible mental impetus which intimidated. People stood instinctively out of her way, as before some rushing force which might overwhelm them. . . . She went on and on, all the summer afternoon, and canvassed the little village with her remorse and confession of crime. Finally the four words which she said at the doors seemed almost involuntary. They became her one natural note, the expression of her whole life. It was as if she had never said any others. . . . When she went up the path to the Maxwell house, she said them where the shadow of a pine-tree fell darkly in front of her like the shadow of a man. She said them when she stood before the door of the house whose hospitality she had usurped. There was a little crowd at her heels, but she did not notice them until she was entering the door, Then she said the words over to them: 'I ain't Esther





Maxwell.' She entered the sitting-room, the people following. There were her three old friends and neighbors, the minister and his wife, Daniel Tuxbury, his sister and her daughter, Mrs. Jane Maxwell and her daughter, and her own Lois. She faced them all and said it again: 'I ain't Esther Maxwell.' . . . Lois pressed forward and clung to her. 'Mother!' she moaned, 'mother!' Then for once her mother varied her set speech. 'Lois wa'n't to blame,' she said; 'I want you to know it, all of you. Lois wa'n't to blame. She didn't know until after I'd done it. She wanted to tell, but I told her they'd put me in prison. Lois wa'n't to blame. I ain't Esther Maxwell.' 'O mother, don't! don't!' Lois sobbed. She hung about her mother's neck, and pressed her lips to that pale, wrinkled face, whose wrinkles seemed now to be laid in stone. Not a muscle of Jane Field's face changed. She kept repeating at intervals, in precisely the same tone, her terrible under-chord to all the excitement about her: 'I ain't Esther Maxwell.'"

## MRS. HUMPHRY WARD'S HEROINES

IN reading Mrs. Humphry Ward's last story, "Eleanor," I felt again, as I had felt before in her work, its general difference from the best American fiction in a particular which may perhaps have caught the notice of others. If it has not, I may be mistaken in my feeling, and shall be unable to persuade others to make it their conviction. But the point is interesting, and if I can make it evident something will have been done toward explaining American novelists to themselves, and reconciling them to their performances as the necessary outcome of their conditions. Possibly, something more will have been done, and they will be satisfied in recognizing that English breadth must always be denied them, and to make the most of the depth which seems to be their characteristic when they are at their best.

### I

The deceitfulness of appearances is notorious, and even when they are the effect of reality they are seldom of such a unanimity that the inference from them cannot reasonably be questioned. You have first to get your appearances, and this alone is a thing of no small difficulty. Many appearances are so purely subjective that, when you come to draw the attention of others to them, they turn out to be disappearances; and, in the case in hand, there will probably be some people to deny

that English fiction is noticeably broad, or American fiction noticeably deep. They will say that Thomas Hardy and George Eliot have both written things that suggest depth as well as breadth, and that Mrs. Ward, who is alone among English writers worthy to be mentioned with these novelists, is so much of the American spirit in her art that, if her work is broad, it is a proof that breadth is as characteristic of American fiction as depth.

The effect is to dissatisfy you with the words themselves, as saying too much, and if, after trying dramatic and epical, you return to them, you wish to explain that you employ neither invidiously, but only with the single desire to trace certain questionable appearances to certain unquestionable facts, and so render them less questionable. I confess that the effect of the breadth I have felt, or seemed to feel, in Mrs. Ward's work was such as to make me discontented with the depth that I remembered in the best American work, as if this were comparatively a defect, since it was necessarily narrower. It was only by reflecting that our depth was the inevitable implication of our civic and social conditions that I was consoled, and restored to something like a national self-respect. To put it paradoxically, our life is too large for our art to be broad. In despair at the immense scope and variety of the material offered it by American civilization, American fiction must specialize, and, turning distracted from the superabundance of character, it must burrow far down in a soul or two.

Men may invent almost anything but themselves, and it was not because Hawthorne made himself psychological, but because he was so, that in the American environment he bent his vision inward. His theory was that our life was too level and too open and too sunnily prosperous for his art, but it was an in-

stinct far subtler than this belief that he obeyed in seeking the subliminal drama. Hawthorne was romantic, but our realists who have followed him have been of the same instinct, and have dealt mainly with the subliminal drama, too. In their books, so faithful to the effect of our every-day life, the practical concerns of it are subordinated to the psychical, not consciously, but so constantly that their subordination has not been a matter of any question. The usual incidents of fiction have not, in the best American novelists, been the prime concern, but the subliminal effect of those incidents. Love itself, which is the meat and drink of fiction, is treated less as a passional than as a psychological phenomenon. Long ago the more artistic of our novelists perceived that the important matter was not what the lovers suffered or enjoyed in getting married, or whether they got married at all or not, but what sort of man and maid their love found them out to be, and how, under its influence, the mutual chemistry of their natures interacted. All the problems, in any case, are incomparably simplified for the English novelist by the definite English conditions. One can no longer call them fixed; but they are still definite, and in a certain way character proceeds from them: the character of a gentleman, a business man, an artisan, a servant, a laborer. Each of these has his being in a way so different from the others' that he is a definitely different creature; and when through some chance, some perverse mixture of the elements, the conditions are traversed, and the character bred of one shows itself in another, it has a stronger relief from the alien background. But, ordinarily, the Englishman feels, thinks, and acts from his class, and when you name his class you measurably state him; after that you have rather to do with what he does than what he is. The result in fiction is a multiplicity of incident and a multi-

tude of persons; and you have breadth rather than depth.

Even in so psychological a story as Mrs. Ward's "Marcella," the definite conditions account for so much that it is, after all, a study of incident more than a study of motive. The conventions of English realism, the county society and the life of the great houses, and interests and opinions of the gentry and their dependants; the hovels and the physical and moral squalor of the poor; the parliamentary election and the agitations of the demagogues and the real reformers; the intervention of the church and the chapel; the poaching and the murder and the hanging—all these things are of the familiar acquaintance of the novel-reader, who knows them from the time of Bulwer down, through the innumerable novelists who have treated of them since. Mrs. Ward treats of them with a fresh mind, but they are in themselves so far from fresh that they seem to stale her thought of them; and the figure that she projects against them, the very novel and very original figure of Marcella, seems to acquire convention from them, and to be as hackneyed as all the rest. The result is a fiction of high order, of a higher order in certain aspects than any since George Eliot's fictions, and yet having breadth rather than depth. This may be an appearance and not a fact. Marcella is so essentially modern, so perfectly of the day before yesterday, that the inquiry into the soul of the socialistic esthete, the girl of good birth and good tradition, emerging from her shady father's past, to find herself engaged to the most conscientious and noble-minded of aristocrats, but at war with all his convictions through the impassioned preferences of her earlier associations, necessarily involves psychological research which goes far if it does not go deep. She is, indeed, so interesting that one wishes the author might have had her

in the sparsely settled region of an American fiction, so that we could have sat down with her in the long leisure of our social existence and divined her to the ultimate mystery of her being. It may be answered that there is really no more of her than her author shows, but it seems as if, in a different environment, there might have been more.

Possibly we touch here a fundamental variance of the English and American life. In former times we Americans were accused of being curious, over-curious, of being insatiable and impertinent questioners of strangers. It may be, however, that we are not so, but that the most penetrating difference between us and the English is that they are social and we are personal. Their denser life, we will say, satisfies them with superficial contrasts, while in our thinner and more homogeneous society the contrasts that satisfy are subliminal. This theory would account for their breadth and our depth without mortifying the self-love of either, which I should like to spare in our case if not in theirs. To float and to dive may be equally creditable.

Our personality is the consequence of our historic sparsity, and it survives beyond its time because the nature of our contiguity is still such as to fix a man's mind strongly upon himself, and to render him restless till he has ascertained how far all other men are like him. We are prodigiously homogeneous, though in the absence of classification we seem so chaotic. We shall change, probably, and then the character of our fiction, our art of representing life, will change, too. Very likely it will become more superficial and less subliminal; it will lose in depth as it gains in breadth. As yet, its attempts to be broad, to be society fiction, have

resulted in a shallowness which is not suggestive of breadth.

## II

The English are less apt than we have been to carry a story abroad, and to find in an alien setting terms more favorable than those of home for the subliminal interests. This may be because they inevitably carry their civilization with them in all possible details down to the emblematic bath-tub, while we find that we can get on abroad fairly well without steam-heat and exposed plumbing, and the American order which they stand for. We are, in fact, far more easily detachable from our native background, and blend far more readily with the alien atmosphere, than the English; so that I think if an American family as nearly as possible corresponding to the Manisties had been set down in the air of Rome, they would have lost their native outline more. The thing is hard to say, and perhaps I shall come as near to suggesting it as may be in noting the impression that the cosmopolitan Englishman gives, of being more English than if he had never left home; whereas, the cosmopolitan American really ceases to be American if he does not become anything else.

Of course, my position can be assailed by saying that there could not be any such American family as the Manisties, who are distinctively and inalienably English, and are of that world which, whether it is really great or not, makes ours look a small world. Manisty has had to do all his life with questions which affect politically, socially, and spiritually the civilization of many races, systems, languages, and religions, as no American public man can have to do with them; and Eleanor Burgoyne, through the English

traditions which admit women to the discussion of such questions, is of a range of thinking and feeling possible to no American woman, except some one who has given up society and gone in for a public life through the advocacy of a great interest, like temperance or the suffrage for women. I allow that all this is true, without allowing all its implications; and in the mean time I fall back to my original position, and invite the reader again to consider whether the fact does not make for that breadth in English fiction which I began by imagining. We will suppose that the author for the sake of getting her main group of people face to face with each other, and keeping them to their psychological problem, wishes to isolate them from the alliances and relations of their past, and therefore takes them into an alien environment. Almost immediately it proves that she has not isolated the English Manisty and Eleanor, but only the American girl, Lucy Foster. With the others, questions of European policy at once come in, and distract their attention from the psychological problem; to Lucy alone these questions are without vital interest, if not without reality. Priests, diplomats, peasants, artists, citizens, society figures come and go in her consciousness, with the effect of deepening it inward and concentrating it in the great question whether she is doing wrong in letting Manisty love her, or letting herself love him, when she feels or knows that Eleanor loves him.

If the situation had been invented by an American novelist, I think he would have studied it mainly through the consciousness of Lucy, and the prime interest of the story would have been personal, psychological, subliminal. The effect would have been depth; and I do not mean this in any bragging way. Now, the main effect is breadth, which, certainly, I could not mean derogatorily. It is indifferent to me, for the

present inquiry, whether the American or the English effect is better; and I wish to note, without disparagement of Mrs. Ward's work, that Mr. Hardy gets "depth" by dealing with persons who are unconventionally circumstanced, or wholly out of society. For much the same reason, the author of the remarkable "Mark Rutherford" books is able to get it. But these alone among English novelists get it in anything like the American measure.

Is it true, then, that the Americans get it because their characters are unconventionally circumstanced, or are not in society? Something very like this might be true; and American fiction is faithfuller to the average American conditions than if it dealt with people conventionally circumstanced and in society, for most of us are certainly not so, as most equally educated Englishmen certainly are so. We have the forms; the society structure is the same with us; but, having built our house and furnished it, we find it a bother, and would rather lodge at a hotel and dine at a restaurant.

Still better, we like to travel, to journey and sojourn in far countries, and amidst the outer strangeness to get more intimately at our inner selves. If we are novelists, we like to take our characters abroad, as if the home sparsity were not enough, and in the resulting isolation to penetrate the last recesses of their mystery, or at least learn that it is not penetrable. More than one piece of our subtlety in this sort could be alleged, but perhaps it is sufficient to allege two, of which what I am saying seems eminently true, namely, "The Marble Faun" and "Daisy Miller." If an English novelist does the same thing, the result is not the same; the English environment is inalienable; the characters are continually frittering themselves away in superficial encounter on the native terms, at dinners,

and luncheons, and teas, and what not, till there is nothing subliminal left in them.

## III

One great objection to words is that they are always oversaying things; and I could easily take up the foregoing postulate and show it untenably excessive. Nevertheless, I think it has some truth in it, and I feel concerning Eleanor Burgoyne that she is not enough alone for the evolution of her innermost self. She is always in a clutter of society, which is right enough, since she is of that English world so cluttered, to our elbow-roomy American sense, as we view it afar or anear; even in her withdrawals from it in pain or in passion, the atmosphere of drawing-rooms seems to envelop her. It is her native air, and one cannot complain, though one feels that a final knowledge of what she might otherwise have been to the reader must be postponed to a future life. What she could be in this, hampered by the perpetual coming and going, and meeting and parting, is a most generously imagined personality. In fact, Mrs. Ward is so good at imagining heroines of noble nature that she ought to be the favorite novelist of her sex, which loves to have its magnanimity recognized; I will not say flattered. The wife of David Grieve, in the novel of his name, is one of these great creatures, and worthily the heroine of what I am not going rashly to call the author's best book, though I should not dispute such a verdict from another. I think it was contrived that the reader should meet her on a more subliminal level than most other English heroines, and this was perhaps so because she was of a social world almost as uncrowded as our own; and perhaps also because there is something much more

ELEANOR

analogous to the American in the Scotch nature than in the English. I am writing without the book, but after the five years which have passed since I read that powerful story she is still present in a sort of tender sublimity, as the fit impersonation of the sacred love whose flame purifies David Grieve's soul of all but the record of his profaner passion.

So much may be expected and exacted of the type of heroine which Mrs. Ward imagines, that the noble goodness of Marcella Maxwell, when she reappears in the story of "Sir George Tressady," can have force not only to regenerate the feeling of Sir George toward herself and transform it to an exalted friendship, but also to turn the jealousy of Lady Tressady to some such complexion. Can such things be? one asks one's self, and then is ashamed of one's self for asking, for doubting. Yet Lady Tressady, in her prettiness and pettiness, her vanity and vulgarity, has the superior probability, and is—I am tempted to say it—more profoundly divined than Marcella. In fact, Marcella loses probability in her second avatar, as socialistic wife to a socializing prime-minister. In the scheme of "Sir George Tressady," the ideal beauty of soul so courageously imagined for her scarcely recompenses the reader for this loss, though he must honor the courage. Her apparition to Tressady, crushed and dying in the coal-mine, is not of the convincing supernaturalism to which Tourguénief and Tolstoy have sometimes carried their naturalism; and her personal beauty, which is so constantly insisted upon, seems at each insistence less impressive. At the risk of being insufferably paradoxical, I should say that Marcella was left less appreciable by being left too little a mystery, and that, in being altogether removed from the vague, she is rendered impalpable to those perceptions which realize personalities. To put it still more perversely, we meet

her too often to know her thoroughly. We know little, light, hard Letty Tressady far better; we have a sense of her; she is the more convincing because, to the very last, we are no more convinced than she is that she is not still jealous of her husband with respect to Marcella, though she is no longer jealous of Marcella with respect to her husband. She has forgiven but she has not forgotten, and she remains with the reader in the luminous question whether she will like being commended to the care of Marcella and Lord Maxwell by her dying husband.

In suggesting such a question, the author evinces psychological depth, and in questions equally incapable of final answer in the case of both the wife and the mistress in "David Grieve" I find proof of a depth in that novel beyond that of any other of Mrs. Ward's books. The wife's relation to David's past amour remains full of satisfying mystery; and in the feeling of the French girl who forsakes him for her art, and escapes in terror from her love of him, there is something that seems to penetrate the very sources of her nature.

## IV

Of course, I am aware of proving too much, but if I am getting at the truth I do not much mind being inconsistent, or even finding myself wrong. If my thesis is that Mrs. Ward, when her fiction deals with the more crowded scenes of English life, loses depth, and when it deals with a sparser environment gains depth, perhaps I shall not find myself so very wrong, after all. I should still have to ask myself how far she had sought such an environment in laying the scene of her last novel in Italy, and in giving her English heroine the relief of an alien setting; how far such a motive was

subconscious with her, and how far she had failed to give it effect.

I have already intimated my sense of her comparative failure, and as for the subconscious motive, that is something that I know of no critical subtlety competent to render evident. The question which remains is, in what degree the inevitable spread of the story has superficialized the heroine's character, or perhaps the impression of her character.

What one has to do, in any case, is to recognize the courageous originality with which Eleanor Burgoyne is imagined. She has been married to a sufficiently unlovable and unloving husband, whose delirious suicide has involved the death of their little son. She struggles up from her crushing sorrow, and in making herself useful to her cousin Manisty as his secretary and counsellor in his work she finds not respite from her grief so much as the chance of new happiness in the hope of his love. But she loves him too well and unwisely to be his unsparing critic; and when the unformed American girl, Lucy Foster, comes into their family circle, and from the fearlessness of her absolute sincerity censures where Eleanor has not the heart to censure, Eleanor has the anguish of seeing the man's fancy veer toward the girl as one of greater authority. Lucy is beautiful, and Eleanor, in the first days, has devoted her taste and knowledge to making her more evidently beautiful. The feeling that she has toward her is not jealousy, or else it is a jealousy so sublimed by her noble nature that it is rather a recognition of the facts than a resentment of them. She weakens, indeed, so far as to put the case to Lucy and ask her to give Manisty up to the love which has earned him but not won him; and the girl consents. But both their wills are crushed in Manisty's,when he makes it plain that his love has nothing to do with justice, and

that he wants what he wants, not because it is best or impersonally right, but because he wants it. This is the way of true love, which we are always exalting as the finest thing in the world, though there are obviously many things finer. It is, at least, honest and sincere, and that is what Eleanor Burgoyne owns in her acquiescence with fate, when she renders Lucy up to her inevitable happiness, if it is happiness to marry Manisty. That the woman should ask the girl to forego her happiness is a daring supposition in which we must acknowledge the author's high esthetic courage, and perhaps the frankness which is almost brutal in Eleanor's despair is truer than any fineness would have been. The contrast of the two lives in that scene, the woman's experience and the girl's innocence, is more valuable than the contrast even of their natures; but possibly in this also the author's work lends itself to my theory of greater breadth and less depth in the English novel as compared with the American. Nothing of subconscious, of subliminal, is left to the reader's conjecture; but I do not at all mean that character is rendered superficial by bringing everything in it to the surface. I am far too fond of the plain light of day for that; but still it may be so contrived that the plain light of day may strike to the nethermost abysses, and that what is most intricate and most recondite in the soul may be rendered luminously apparent at its proper depth.

V

The personality and the dramatic office of Eleanor are greatly imagined, and they remain essentially unaffected by the handling. You get the meaning of her tragedy and the innermost meaning, which is perhaps less poignant than it might be if it were relieved by

LUCY FOSTER

comedy. Mrs. Ward is serious, and, no doubt, in this she has her strongest hold upon her vast public, for the average woman, if not the average man, likes her prophets or prophetesses always to seem as much in earnest as they are. Through the absence of humor, Mrs. Ward is a little lower, if one chooses to think so, than that great woman novelist whose level she more nearly reaches than any of her successors. You cannot quite name her in the same breath with George Eliot; but you can name her in the next breath; and it is to be questioned if even George Eliot had a wider and stronger grasp of the important actualities of English life. In "Eleanor," whether the book tells for or against my theory of greater depth in American fiction and greater breadth in the English, one must acknowledge that increasing mastery of which each of her successive books has given proofs. She has risen to her present eminence so wholly since American fiction began to shape itself from the art of Continental fiction that one might almost claim an American influence in her work; but that might well be claiming too much. Her manner is still marked by the ejaculatory and suspiratory self-indulgence of the minor English novelists, to which George Eliot herself was not superior. She draws her breath in open pathos, and she caresses a situation or a character with a pitying epithet or adjective, as George Eliot does in the case of some heroine she likes very much, notably Maggie Tulliver, or Janet Dempster, and less notably Dorothea Brooke. The foible is characteristic of all but the finest artists in English fiction, and in her greater moments Mrs. Ward does not indulge it. There is nothing of this weak pity of her own creations in such a scene as that where Eleanor reverses her prayer to Lucy Foster, and, baring her wasted neck to show herself a dying woman, makes the girl promise to be true to the love between her

and Manisty. The most touching moment of the whole story, that when she asks Manisty to carry her up the stairs, is of an intense pathos, enfeebled by no suggestion of feeling in the author. "Eleanor, with her hand on Marie's arm, tottered across the court-yard. At the convent door her strength failed her. She turned to Manisty: 'I can't walk up those stairs. Do you think you could carry me? I am very light.' Struck with sudden emotion, he threw his arms round her. She yielded like a tired child. He, who had instinctively prepared himself for a certain weight, was aghast at the ease with which he lifted her. Her head, in its pretty black hat, fell against his breast. Her eyes closed. He wondered if she had fainted. He carried her to her own room and laid her on the sofa there. . . . As he left the room Eleanor settled down happily on her pillow. 'The first and only time!' she thought. 'My heart on his—my arms round his neck. There must be impressions that outlast all others. I shall manage to put them all away at the end—but that!'"

Such a passage (and it is by no means the only passage of its kind in the book) is of a fineness so penetrating, so far-reaching, that a critic more enamoured of his thesis than I might own it a proof against him. If he had been arguing that English fiction had breadth but wanted depth, he might urge that it was one of the exceptions which proved the rule. But I prefer to save myself by a little different means, and, referring to a suggestion already made somewhat faint-heartedly, I would leave it to the candid reader to say whether, in such instances, Mrs. Ward was not rather like the American than the English novelists.

THE END

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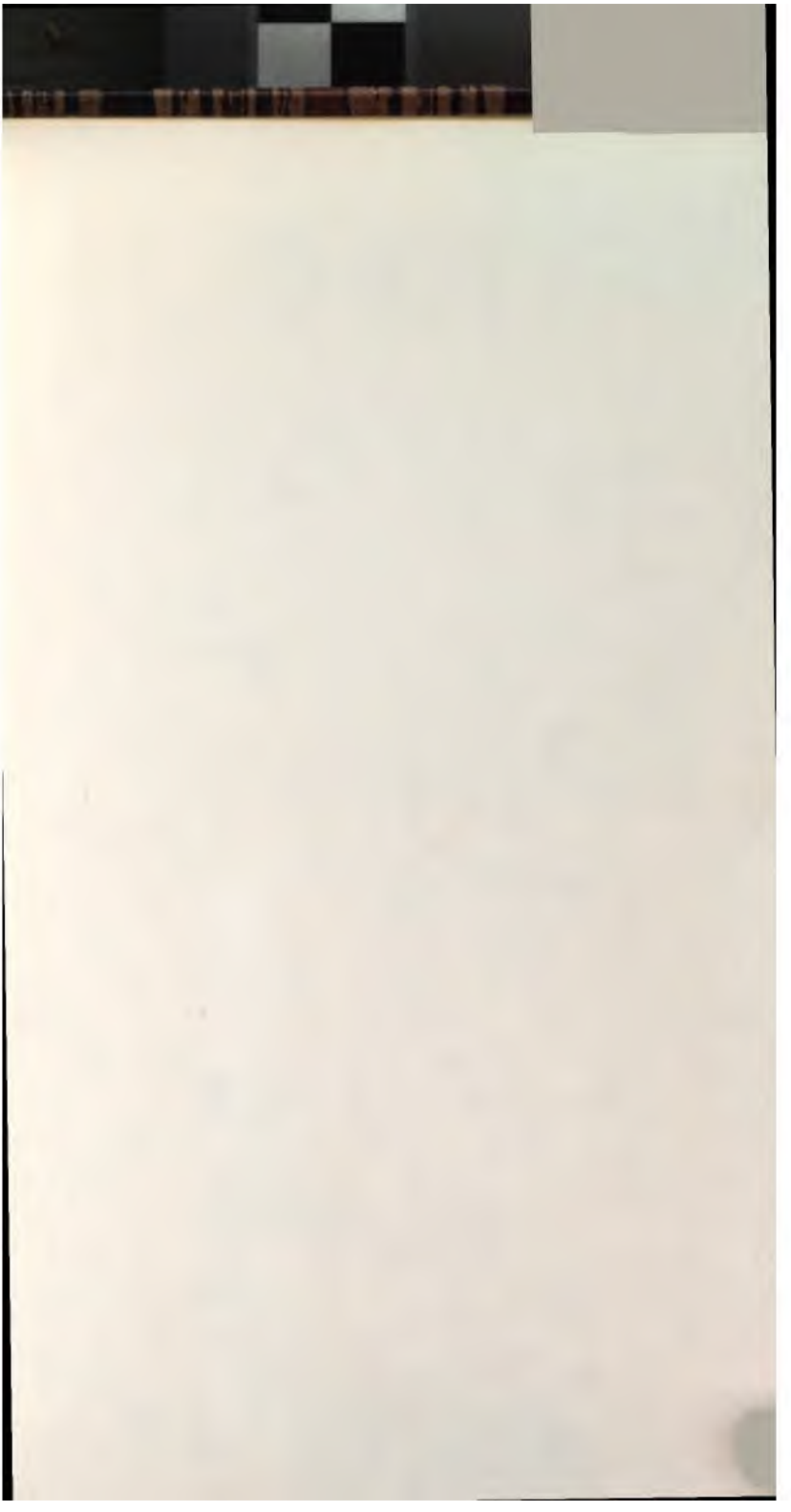

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